CORPUS
SCRIPTORUM CHRISTIANORUM ORIENTALIUM
EDITUM CONSILIO
UNIVERSITATIS CATHOLICAE AMERICAE
ET UNIVERSITATIS CATHOLICAE LOVANIENSIS

Vol. 500

SUBSIDIA
TOMUS 81

HISTORY OF ASCETICISM IN THE SYRIAN ORIENT

A Contribution to the History of Culture In the Near East

III

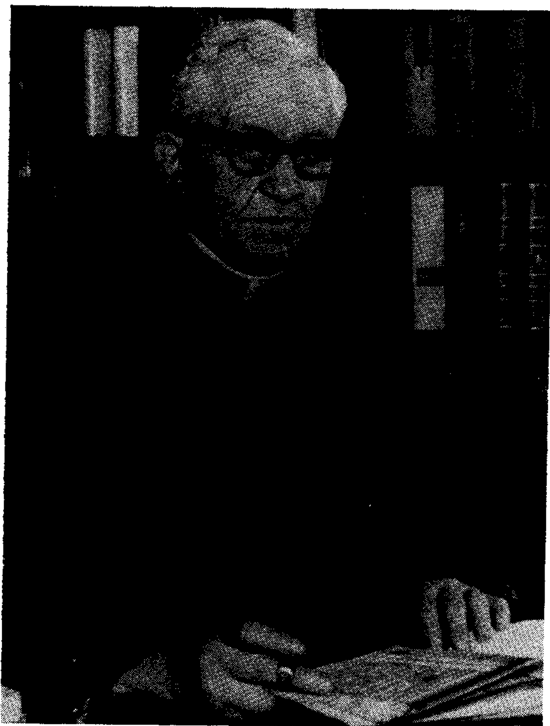
BY

ARTHUR VÖÖBUS †

LOVANII
IN AEDIBUS E. PEETERS
1988

ISSN 0070-0444
D/1988/0602/10

Imprimerie Orientaliste, s.p.r.l., Louvain (Belgique)



PIÆ MEMORIÆ
RENATI DRAGUET
QVI CORPVS SCRIPTORVM CHRISTIANORVM ORIENTALIVM
BELLO LOVANII SÆVIENTE DESTRVCTVM
DENVO CONDIDIT
DEINDE INDEFESSO STVDIO AC MIRO INGENIO ELABORATVM
TRECENTIS FERE VOLVMINIBVS ADAVXIT
VLTIMO TANDEM OPVS INIQVE EREPTVM
SEMPER SVVM CONSTANTER AC LIBERE VINDICAVIT
SERIEI FIDELITER HVC VSQVE SERVATÆ
ET VIA AC RATIONE QVA AVCTOR VSVS EST PROVECTÆ
VOLVMEN HOC QVINGENTESIMVM
DEDICATVR

Professor Arthur Vööbus was particularly proud
to have been entrusted with the five-hundredth volume of the C.S.C.O.
In these five hundred pages he presents the third of five volumes
which he was planning as his masterly *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient*.
Unfortunately, the ultimate satisfaction
of actually holding this volume in his hands, was not to be his:
he departed this life on September 26th, 1988 while he was still correcting the first proofs.
So this will be the last, and perhaps the most challenging,
of the twenty-seven volumes he contributed to the C.S.C.O.
Along with the dedication that was intended for the memory of his friend R. Draguet,
another one is due to him, a thankful tribute to a great Syriac scholar,
who was also a convinced Christian, a devoted patriot and a man of warmth and humanity.
«Henceforth, says the Spirit, he may rest from his labours». (*Rev.* 14:13).

PREFACE

It is a matter of deep regret that the interval, since the publication of the second volume of this work and now, has become so long. The second volume of this work appeared in 1960. That an inordinate lapse of time was beyond my control I have given a more detailed explanation elsewhere, one which I felt I owed readers[1].

The previous volumes have treated the beginning of asceticism in Syria, Mesopotamia and Persia and the development of the movement and its expansion. They also have devoted much attention to the ascetic practices in all of the variegated forms of mortification in which the Syrians have proved themselves. These practices, in the course of time, became deep-rooted traditions which have lasted more or less for centuries. Actually no new forms of ascetic expression were created in later times; these phenomena have been sufficiently covered and need no further discussion. It is time to direct attention to other issues which the movement of Syrian monasticism has produced.

Primary attention in this third volume has been devoted to two important areas which have grown out of the movement of asceticism.

The first concerns the sources which monasticism produced in order to nourish the ascetic life in the monastic communities, in the cells of ascetics and in the huts of the anchorites, the sources from which the spiritual athletes drew their inspiration. Therefore it is necessary to deal with the thoughts, ideas, figures and images which were created to sustain their self-consciousness and to motivate them in their ascetic practices and acts of mortification. These are the components which contributed to the development of the system of ascetic spirituality and mysticism. All of it, taken together, constitutes the spiritual force which lies behind the extraordinary phenomena produced by the Syrians. In the course of time, ascetic theology developed into a kind of philosophy of asceticism and spirituality, taking an independent course by comparison with the Egyptian and Byzantine monasticism. We see the development of a thoughtworld, rich and manifold, growing out of ancient Syrian ascetic imagery, gradually enriched by a «learned» approach or philosophy of spirituality, springing from indigenous as well as outside

[1] See the Preface in my *Studies in the History of the Gospel Text in Syriac*, Vol. II.

impulses. This is the realm which it is absolutely necessary to understand if the phenomenon of Syrian asceticism and monasticism is to be grasped.

As important a concern in this volume is another genre of sources, equally important in order to understand Syrian monasticism. These sources flow from monasteries and other autorities interested in the furtherance of monastic discipline. Here we have to do with the legislative sources, canons and rules set up to regulate organized life in the monastic communities. These are a very valuable division in the primary sources which unfold the ways in which the issues of asceticism were resolved with regard to life in the monasteries and convents. In their manifoldness and variegation, they give us many insights into the life of monasticism which other sources cannot give: sociological issues, organization of the communities, spiritual leadership in monastic centers, ascetic practices, monastic discipline, the regulation of daily life and the regulations between the communities and the church, as well as the outside world.

There was a time when complaints about the scarcity of these sources were common. As this volume unfolds, we are grateful that a very impressive number of sources in the genre of monastic legislation, thanks to the relentless search for new manuscript sources hidden here and there in the Syrian Orient, will pass before us.

In connection with these two areas of primary sources, it must be emphasized that the treatment of them rests on many totally unknown records which have been ferreted out of their places of hiding in the Syrian Orient. In fact, we find ourselves faced with a satisfactory prospect, namely, massive enrichment via unearthed records for the deepening of research. The very presentation of such a wealth of unknown manuscript sources constitutes an event in itself. That within a single volume such a plethora of totally unknown manuscript sources can be presented is a matter of profound gratification.

Another set of concerns in this volume has to do with the role of Syrian monasticism, its part in the religious, spiritual, social, cultural and cross-cultural history in the Near Middle East, Arabia, and even in Africa.

One development which calls for treatment in the first instance is the founding of the Monophysite church in which Syrian monasticism played an essential and decisive role. This event brought about very deep changes on the ecclesiastical scene in the Syrian Orient. Monasticism

became the spiritual force of the movement, and it had the strength to endure all the reprisals and persecutions, and during the most critical situations, the ability to provide able leaders to carry on the struggle and undergo all of the birth pangs of the Monophysite church. The formation of this church demanded men of extraordinary stamina and spirit of self-sacrifice, only spiritual leaders worthy of leading the ranks in monastic garbs.

Next come the efforts of the Syrian monastic movement in the areas of missionary enterprise and evangelization. That which took place over wide areas, indeed, evokes amazement.

Since the missionary impact of monasticism upon Armenia[2] and Gruzinia[3] have already been treated, that discussion does not need to be repeated here. It remains to investigate the evangelization and the radiation of Christianity in the wide realm of the Arabs. This concerns Arab nomads, semi-nomads, tribes and clusters of tribes in Syria, Mesopotamia and Arabia. This was an enterprise which, owing to its particular difficulties and hardships, only monasticism, with its forces of extraordinary devotion, self-sacrifice, strength and stamina could undertake. As a result of these endeavors, many-colored and variegated huge Arab communities, spread over wide territories, gradually took on a different complexion with regard to their religious and spiritual outlook during the pre-Islamic centuries.

Not only did the missionary enterprise take place in Syria, Mesopotamia and Arabia, but also, as the investigation into the expansion of missionary efforts demanded, across South Arabia to Ethiopia. The beginnings of Christianity, connected with the efforts of Frumentios, obviously must have lost their initial impact. The Christianization of the country required a longer period for consolidation and thus the spread of Christianity needed more than one impulse in order to become established in the land. Here, again, Syrian monasticism stepped in. It is the merit of the Syrian monks to have given a renewed and fruitful impetus so that the Christian cause took on a new turn in the country of the Negus.

Thus, over a wide territory, Syrian monasticism was able to exercise its spiritual force, spreading fruitful stimuli which changed the spiritual

[2] Vööbus, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient* II, p. 353ff.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 358ff.

complexion of the peoples living in the territories, beginning with Armenia and ending with Ethiopia.

One other particular concern must be mentioned. It has to do with the special question, namely of the impact of Syrian monasticism upon the Muslim Arabs. We have to do with the problem of the way the rough, often too wild, sons of the desert of Arabia, the warriors and conquerors of the new territories in the expansion of Islam, were internally conquered by those vanquished. Our approach has been made from three directions. The first concerns the spreading of the spirit of charity, mercy and humane warmth, the radiation of deeper humane values. The second concerns the impact of asceticism and mysticism which quietly permeated deeper spirits in Islam, developing gradually into the movement of Sufism. The third approach concerns the cultural and scholarly realm for which the Syrians had created very vital premises which the Arabs were easily able to appropriate. Here is to be found the key for the spectacular rise of the Arab culture.

Finally, it is natural that the treatment of all these issues has to take the historical framework under changed conditions into account. The collapse of Byzantine rule in the eastern provinces, as well as that of the empire of the Sassanids during the Arab invasion, inaugurated a new era, the rule of the Umayyads and then that of the rule of the Abbasids, with new premises and conditions of life.

ABBREVIATIONS

ABBELOOS, *De vita et scriptis Jacobi* = J.B. ABBELOOS, *De vita et scriptis S. Jacobi Batnarum Sarugi episcopi*. Lovanii 1867.

ʿABDĪŠŌʿ, *Catalogus librorum*, ed. ASSEMANI = EBEDJESUS, *Catalogus librorum ecclesiasticorum*, ed. J.S. ASSEMANI, in: BiblO III, 1. Romae 1725.

ʿABDĪŠŌʿ, *Nomocanon*, ed. A. ASSEMANI = EBEDJESUS, *Nomocanon*, ed. A. ASSEMANI, in: SVNC X. Romae 1838.

AbhAWB = Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Berlin. Berlin.

AbhGWG = Abhandlungen der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen. Göttingen.

AbhKM = Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes. Leipzig.

AbhPAW = Abhandlungen der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Berlin.

ABRAMOWSKI, *Dionysius von Tellmahre* = R. ABRAMOWSKI, *Dionysius von Tellmahre, jakobitischer Patriarch von 818-845. Zur Geschichte der Kirche unter dem Islam*, in: AbhKM XXV, 2. Leipzig 1940.

AbrNahr = *Abr Nahrain*. Melbourne.

ABŪ 'L-BARAKĀT, *Le livre de la lampe des ténèbres*, éd. VILLECOURT = *Le livre de la lampe des ténèbres et de l'exposition (lumineuse) du service (de l'Église) par Abū 'l-Barakāt, connu sous le nom d'Ibn Kabar*, éd. L. VILLECOURT, in: PO XX. Paris 1929.

ABŪ 'L-BARAKĀT, *Miṣbāḥ aẓ-ẓilma*, hrsgg. von W. RIEDEL = ABŪ 'L-BARAKĀT, *Miṣbaḥ aẓ-ẓilma. Der Katalog der christlischen Schriften in arabischen Sprache*, hrsgg. von W. RIEDEL, in: NachGWG. Göttingen 1902.

ABŪ 'L-FEDA, *Géographie* I-II, tr. GUYARD = *Géographie d'Abulféda* I-II, tr. S. GUYARD. Paris 1883.

ABŪ 'L-FEDA, *Historia anteislamica*, ed. FLEISCHER = ABULFEDA, *Historia anteislamica*, ed. H.O. FLEISCHER. Lipsiae 1831.

ABU NAṢR AD DĪN = YAḤYĀ IBN JARIS, *Mursid*.

ABU SHUJA' RUDHRAWARI, *Continuation of the Experiences*, tr. MARGOLIOUTH = ABU SHUJA, *Continuation of the Experiences*.

Acta Aaronis, ed. TURAIEV = *Acta Aaronis*, ed. B. TURAIEV. Romae 1905.

Acta ʿAbd al-Masīḥ, ed. CORLUY = *Acta Sancti Mar Abdu'l Masich*, ed. J. CORLUY, in: ABoll V(1886).

Acta Baṣalota Mikā'ēl, ed. ROSSINI = *Acta Baṣalota Mikā'ēl*, ed. K. CONTI ROSSINI. Romae 1905.

Acta conciliorum oecum., ed. SCHWARTZ = *Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum iussu atque mandato Societatis Scientiarum Argentoratensis*, ed. E. SCHWARTZ. Berolini et Lipsiae 1914ff.

Acta et diplomata graeca, ed. MIKLOSICH-MÜLLER = *Acta et diplomata graece medii aevi sacra et profana*, ed. F. MIKLOSICH ET I. MÜLLER. Vindobonae 1862-87.

Acta Honorii, ed. ROSSINI = *Acta Honorii*, ed. K. CONTI ROSSINI. Romae 1905.

Acta martyrum I-VII, ed. BEDJAN = *Acta martyrum et sanctorum* I-VII, ed. P. BEDJAN. Parisiis 1890-97.
Acta Pantaleonis, ed. ROSSINI = *Acta Pantaleonis*, ed. K. CONTI ROSSINI. Romae 1904.
Acta Philippi, ed. TURAIEV = *Acta Philippi*, ed. B. TURAIEV, in: MonAethHag I. Petropoli 1902.
ActaSS = Acta sanctorum. Bruxelles.
Acta Takla Ḥawāryāt, ed. ROSSINI = *Acta Takla Hawāryāt*, ed. K. CONTI ROSSINI. Romae 1910.
ActaUGot = Acta Universitatis Gotoburgensis.Göteborg.
ActesCIO = Actes du Xᵉ Congrès International des Orientalistes. Paris 1894.
ADAM, «Grundbegriffe des Mönchtums» = A. ADAM, «Grundbegriffe des Mönchtums in sprachlicher Sicht», in: ZKg LXV(1953-4).
AHRENS, «Christliches in Qoran» = K. AHRENS, «Christliches in Qoran», in: ZDMG CXXXIV(1930).
AKHṬAL, *al-Dīwān*, ed. SALHANI = AKHṬAL, *al-Dīwān*, ed. A. SALHANI. Beyrouth 1891-2.
Akten der Ephesinischen Synode, ed. FLEMMING = *Akten der Ephesinischen Synode vom Jahre 449 syrisch*, hrsgg. von J. FLEMMING, in: AbhGWG NF XV. Berlin 1917.
ALBERT, «Une lettre spirituelle de Jacques de Saroug» = M. ALBERT, «Une lettre spirituelle de Jacques de Saroug, évêque monophysite des Vᵉ-VIᵉ siècles», in: PdO III(1972).
ALTANER-STUIBER, *Patrologie* = B. ALTANER und A. STUIBER, *Patrologie*. Freiburg-Basel 1966.
AMR, *De patriarchis nest. commentaria*, ed. GISMONDI = AMR, *De patriarchis nestorianorum commentaria*, ed. H. GISMONDI. Romae 1896.
Analecta syriaca, ed. LAGARDE = *Analecta syriaca*, ed. P. LAGARDE. Lipsiae 1858.
Anaphorae syriacae I-IV, ed. RAES = *Anaphorae syriacae* I-IV, ed. A. RAES. Roma 1951.
AnBoll = *Analecta Bollandiana*. Bruxelles.
ALittCanS = Ancienne littérature canonique syriaque. Paris.
ANDRAE, *Der Ursprung des Islams und das Christentum* = T. ANDRAE, *Der Ursprung des Islams und das Christentum*. Uppsala 1926.
ANFRAY, «Les rois d'Axum d'après la numismatique» = F. ANFRAY, «Les rois d'Axum d'après la numismatique», in: JES VI.
Ang = *Angelicum*. Roma.
ANTONIOS, *Vita Symeonis*, ed. LIETZMANN = ANTONIUS, *Vita Symeonis*, ed. H. LIETZMANN, in: TuU XXXII,4. Leipzig 1908.
ANZATI, «Numismatica Axumita» = A. ANZANI, «Numismatica Axumita», in: RivIdNum XXXIX(1926).
AOr = *Acta Orientalia*. Lugduni Batavorum.
APHRAHAT, *Demonstrationes*, ed. PARISOT = APHRAATES, *Demonstrationes*, ed. I. PARISOT, in: PS I,1-2. Parisiis 1894-1907.
'APHRĒM, *Carmina Nisibena*, ed. BECK = *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Carmina Nisibena* I, hrsgg. von E. BECK, in: CSCO Scr. Syri XCII. Louvain 1961.

'APHRĒM, *Commentaire*, éd. LELOIR = SAINT ÉPHREM, *Commentaire de l'évangile concordant*, éd. L. LELOIR. Dublin 1963.
'APHRĒM, *Commentaire, arm. éd. LELOIR* = S. ÉPHREM, *Commentaire de l'Évangile concordant, version arménienne*, ed. L. LELOIR, in: CSCO Scr. Arm. 1. Louvain 1953.
'APHRĒM, *Contra haereses*, ed. BECK = *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen Contra haereses*, hrsgg. von E. BECK, in: CSCO Scr. Syri LXXVI. Louvain 1957.
'APHRĒM, *De nativitate*, ed. BECK = *Des hl. Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen De Nativitate*, hrsgg. von E. BECK, in: CSCO Scr. Syri LXXXII. Louvain 1959.
'APHRĒM, *Epistula ad montanos*, ed. OVERBECK = *Ephraem Syri epistula ad montanos*, ed. J.J. OVERBECK, in: Opera selecta. Oxonii 1865.
'APHRĒM, *Hymnes conservées en version arménienne*, éd. MARIÈS - MERCIER = *Hymnes de saint Éphrem conservées en version arménienne*, éd. L. MARIÈS et C. MERCIER, in: PO XXX,1. Paris 1962.
'APHRĒM, *Hymni de virginitate* I-I, ed. RAHMANI = *Ephraemi hymni de virginitate* I-II, ed. I.E. RAHMANI. Sharfeh 1907.
'APHRĒM, *Hymni et sermones* I-IV, ed. LAMY = *Ephraemi Syri hymni et sermones*, ed. T.J. LAMY. Mechliniae 1882-92.
'APHRĒM, *In Genesim et Exodum commentarii*, ed. TONNEAU = *Sancti Ephraem Syri in Genesim et Exodum commentarii*, ed. R.M. TONNEAU, in: CSCO Scr. Syri LXXI. Louvain 1955.
'APHRĒM, *Opera omnia* I-III, ed. MOBARREK = *Ephraem Syri opera omnia quae extant* I-III, ed. P. MOBARREK. Romae 1737-43.
'APHRĒM, *Prose Refutations of Mani, Marcion and Bardaisan*, ed. MITCHELL = *S. Ephraim's Prose Refutations of Mani, Marcion and Bardaisan* I, ed. C.W. MITCHELL. London 1912. Vol. II, Completed by A.A. BEVAN and F.C. BURKITT. London 1921.
'APHRĒM, *Sermones duo*, ed. ZINGERLE = *Ephraemi Syri sermones duo*, ed. P. ZINGERLE. Brixen 1868.
'APHRĒM, *Le Testament*, éd. DUVAL = *Le Testament de S. Éphrem*, éd. R. DUVAL, in: JA IX, XVII(1901).
Apocryphal Acts I-II, ed. WRIGHT = *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles* I-II, ed. W. WRIGHT London 1871.
ArchHDO = Archives d'Histoire du Droit Oriental.
ArchMar = Archives Marocaines. Paris.
ARMALET, *Catalogue* = I. ARMALET, *Catalogue des manuscrits de Charfet*. Jounieh 1936.
ARMALET, *Couvents de Mardin* = I. ARMALET, *Couvents de Mardin*.
ASSEMANI, *Bibliotheca orient.* I-III = J.S. ASSEMANI, *Bibliotheca orientalis* I-III. Romae 1719-28.
ASSEMANI, *Catalogus* = S.E. et J.S. ASSEMANI, *Bibliothecae Vaticanae codicum manuscriptorum catalogus* I-III. Romae 1758-59.
ASSEMANI, *Catalogus Med. Laur.* = S.E. ASSEMANI, *Bibliothecae Mediceae*

Laurentianae et Palatinae codicum manuscriptorum orientalium catalogus. Florentiae 1742.

ASSFALG, *Syrische Handschriften* = J. ASSFALG, *Syrische Handschriften. Syrische, karšunische, christlich-palästinische, neusyrische und mandäische Handschriften*, in: VdOHD V. Wiesbaden 1963.

AttiRAL = Atti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei. Memoria della classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche. Roma.

BAARDA, «The Gospel Text in the Biography of Rabbula» = T. BAARDA, «The Gospel Text in the Biography of Rabbula», in: VigChr XIV(1960).

BĀBAI, *Liber de unione*, ed. VASCHALDE = BĀBAI, *Liber de unione*, ed. A. VASCHALDE, in: CSCO Scr. Syri XXXI. Parisiis 1915.

BAc = British Academy. London.

BAKER, «The NT Text of the Syriac Liber Graduum» = A. BAKER, «The New Testament Text of the Syriac Liber Graduum», in: *Studia Evangelica* IV, in: TuU CIII. Berlin 1968.

BAKER, «Syriac and Scriptural Quotations of Ps. Macarius» = A. BAKER, «Syriac and Scriptural Quotations of Pseudo Macarius», in: JThS XX (1969).

BAKER, «Fasting to the World» = A. BAKER, «Fasting to the World», in: JBL LXXXIV(1965).

BALĀDHURI, *al-Futūḥ al-buldān*, ed. DE GOEJE = BALĀDHURI, *al-Futūḥ al-buldān*, ed. M. J. DE GOEJE. Leiden 1863-66.

BĀLAI, *Beiträge*, ed. ZETTERSTÉEN = *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der religiösen Dichtung Balais*, hrsgg. von K. V. ZETTERSTÉEN. Leipzig 1922.

BAR BAHLŪL, *Lexicon syriacum* I-III, ed. DUVAL = BAR BAHLŪL, *Lexicon syriacum* I-III, ed. R. DUVAL. Paris 1901.

BAR ʿEBRĀYĀ, *Le candélabre des sanctuaires*, éd. BAKOŠ = *Le candélabre des sanctuaires de Grégoire Aboulfaradj dit Barhebraeus*, éd. J. BAKOŠ, in: PO XXII, 4; XXIV, 3. Paris 1930-33.

BAR ʿEBRĀYĀ, *Chronicon syriacum*, ed. BRUNS-KIRSCH = *Gregorii Barhebraei chronicon syriacum*, ed. P. J. BRUNS et G. G. KIRSCH. Lipsiae 1879.

BAR ʿEBRĀYĀ, *Ethicon*, ed. BEDJAN = *Barhebraei Ethicon seu moralia*, ed. P. BEDJAN. Paris 1898.

BAR ʿEBRĀYĀ, *Nomocanon*, ed. BEDJAN = *Gregorii Barhebraei Nomocanon*, ed. P. BEDJAN. Parisiis 1898.

BARḤADBEŠABBA, *Histoire*, éd. NAU = BARḤADBEŠABBA ʿARBĀYĀ, *La première partie de l'histoire*, éd. F. NAU, in: PO XXIII. Paris 1932.

BÄSS, «Der Liber graduum ein messalianisches Buch?» = P. BÄSS, «Der Liber graduum ein messalianisches Buch?», in: ZDMG Suppl. I (1969).

BAUMSTARK, *Festbrevier und Kirchenjahr* = A. BAUMSTARK, *Festbrevier und Kirchenjahr der syrischen Jakobiten. Eine liturgiegeschichtliche Vorarbeit*, in: StGKdA III, 3-5. Paderborn 1910.

BAUMSTARK, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur* = A. BAUMSTARK, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*. Bonn 1922.

BAUMSTARK, «Literarische Handschriften» = A. BAUMSTARK, «Die literarischen Handschriften des jakobitischen Markusklosters in Jerusalem», in: OrChr II-III(1912-3).

BAUMSTARK, «Literarische Handschriften» = A. BAUMSTARK, «Die literarischen Handschriften des jakobitischen Markusklosters in Jerusalem», in: OrChr I-II(1911-12).

BAUMSTARK, «Syrische Literatur» = A. BAUMSTARK, «Syrische Literatur», in: HdO III, 2. Leiden 1954.

BECK, «Ein Beitrag zur Terminologie des ältesten syrischen Mönchtums» = E. BECK, «Ein Beitrag zur Terminologie des ältesten syrischen Mönchtums», in: StAns XXXVIII(1956).

BELL, *The Origin of Islam* = R. BELL, *The Origin of Islam in Its Christian Environment*. London 1926.

BENZ, *Die protestantische Thebais* = E. BENZ, *Die protestantische Thebais: Zur Nachwirkung Makarius des Ägypters im Protestantismus des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts in Europa und Amerika*. Mainz 1963.

BeO = Biblica et Orientalia. Roma.

BERNHARD, *Die Chronologie der syrischen Handschriften* = P. L. BERNHARD, *Die Chronologie der syrischen Handschriften*, in: VOHD XIV. Wiesbaden 1971.

BerVSächAW = Berichte über die Verhandlungen der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig. Leipzig.

BEULAY, «Précisions touchant l'identité de Jean Saba» = R. BEULAY, «Précisions touchant l'identité et la biographie de Jean Saba de Dalyatha», in: PdOr VIII(1977-8).

BHO = Bibliotheca Hagiographica Orientalis. Bruxelles.

BiblAeH = Bibliothèque archéologique et historique. Paris.

BiblHArm = Bibliothèque historique arménienne. Paris.

AL-BIRUNI, *Chronology of Ancient Nations*, tr. SACHAU = AL-BIRUNI, *Chronology of Ancient Nations*, tr. E. SACHAU. London 1879.

BISCIONE, *Bibliothecae Med. Laur. catalogus* = A. M. BISCIONE, *Bibliothecae Mediceo-Laurentianae catalogus*. Firenze 1752.

BJRL = *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*. Manchester.

BLUM, *Rabbula von Edessa* = G. G. BLUM, *Rabbula von Edessa. Der Christ, der Bischof, der Theologe*, in: CSCO Subs XXXIV. Louvain 1969.

AL-BOKHĀRI, *Les traditions islamiques* I-IV, tr. HOUDAS - MARÇAIS = EL-BOKHĀRI, *Les traditions islamiques* I-IV, tr. O. HOUDAS et W. MARÇAIS. Paris 1903-14.

Book of the Himyarites, ed. MOBERG = *Book of the Himyarites*, ed. A. MOBERG. Lund 1920-24.

The Book of the Holy Hierotheos, ed. MARSH = *The Book which is Called the Book of the Holy Hierotheos With Extracts from the Prolegomena and Commentary of Theodosios of Antioch and from the «Book of Excerpts» and Other Works of Gregory Bar-Hebraeus*, ed. F. S. MARSH. London-Oxford 1927.

BOUSSET, *Apophthegmata* = W. BOUSSET, *Apophthegmata*. Tübingen 1923.

BOUYER, *La spiritualité* = L. BOUYER, *La spiritualité du Nouveau Testament et des Pères*. Paris 1960.

BRIGHTMAN, *Liturgies Eastern and Western* = F. E. BRIGHTMAN, *Liturgies Eastern and Western Being the Texts Original or Translated of the Principal Liturgies of the Church*. Oxford 1896.

BROCK, «Baptismal Themes in the Writings of Jacob» = S. BROCK, «Baptismal Themes in the Writings of Jacob of Serug», in: ORChrA CCV(1978).
BROOKS, «The Patriarch Paul of Antioch» = E. W. BROOKS, «The Patriarch Paul of Antioch and the Alexandrian Schism of 575», in: ByzZ XXX(1930).
BRÜNNOW - VON DOMASZEWSKI, *Die Provincia Arabia* = R. BRÜNNOW und A. VON DOMASZEWSKI, *Die Provincia Arabia* I-III. Strassburg 1904-09.
BullIFArchO = Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale. Le Caire.
BURKITT, *Early Eastern Christianity* = F.C. BURKITT, *Early Eastern Christianity*. London 1904.
BURKITT, *Ephraim's Quotations from the Gospel* = F.C. BURKITT, *S. Ephraim's Quotations from the Gospel*, in: TaS VII, 2. Cambridge 1901.
BUTLER, *Ancient Architecture in Syria* = H.C. BUTLER, *Ancient Architecture in Syria: Northern Syria*. Leyden 1907-20.
Byz = *Byzantion*.
ByzZ = *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*. Leipzig-Berlin.
CAETANI, *Annali dell' Islam* = L. CAETANI, *Annali dell' Islam*. Milano 1905-26.
CAHEN, «Fiscalité, propriété, antagonismes sociaux en Haute-Mésopotamie» = C. CAHEN, «Fiscalité, propriété, antagonismes sociaux en Haute-Mésopotamie au temps des premiers 'Abbāsides d'après Denys de Tell-Mahré», in: Arabica I(1954).
CHABOT, *Littérature syriaque* = J.B. CHABOT, *Littérature syriaque*. Paris 1934.
Catalogus Bibl. Acad. Lugduni Bat. = *Catalogus codicum orientalium Bibliothecae Lugduni Batavorum*. Lugduni Batavorum 1873.
CBU = Contributions of the Baltic University. Hamburg-Pinneberg.
CERSOY, «Manuscrits orientaux» = P. CERSOY, «Les manuscrits orientaux de Mgr David au Musée Borgia de Rome», in: ZfA IX(1894).
CHABOT, *De Isaaci Ninivitae vita* = I.B. CHABOT, *De Isaaci Ninivitae vita, scriptis et doctrina*. Lovanii 1892.
CHABOT, «Éclaircissements sur quelques points» = J.B. CHABOT, «Éclaircissements sur quelques points de la littérature syriaque», in: JA VIII(1906).
CHABOT, «Manuscrits syriaques de la Bibliothèque Nationale» = J.B. CHABOT, «Notice sur les manuscrits syriaques de la Bibliothèque Nationale acquis depuis 1874», in: JA IX, VIII(1896).
CHARLES, *Le christianisme des Arabes nomades* = H. CHARLES, *Le christianisme des Arabes nomades sur le Limes et dans le désert syro-mésopotamien*. Paris 1936.
CHĀZI IBN AL-WĀSIṬĪ, *An Answer to the Dhimmis*, tr. GOTTHEIL = CHĀZI IBN AL-WĀSIṬĪ, «An Answer to the Dhimmis», tr. R.J.H. GOTTHEIL, in: JAOS (1921).
CHESNUT, *Three Monophysite Christologies* = R.C. CHESNUT, *Three Monophysite Christologies*. Oxford 1976.
CHist = *Church History*.
«A Christian Bahira Legend», ed. GOTTHEIL = «A Christian Bahira Legend», ed. R.J.H. GOTTHEIL, in: ZfAss XIII(1898).
Chronica minora, ed. GUIDI = *Chronica minora*, ed. I. GUIDI, in: CSCO Scr. Syri I. Parisiis 1903.

Chronica minora, ed. BROOKS = *Chronica minora*, ed. E.W. BROOKS, in: CSCO Scr. Syri III. Parisiis 1904.
Chronica minora, ed. CHABOT = *Chronica minora*, ed. J.B. CHABOT, in: CSCO Scr. Syr. IV. Parisiis 1904.
Chronica minora, ed. BROOKS-GUIDI-CHABOT = *Chronica minora*, ed. E.W. BROOKS, I. GUIDI et J.B. CHABOT, in: CSCO Scr. Syri V. Parisiis 1905.
Chronicon ad ann. 1234 pert., ed. CHABOT = *Anonymi auctoris chronicon ad A.C. 1234 pertinens* I-II, ed. J.B. CHABOT, in: CSCO Scr. Syri XXXVI-XXXVII. Louvain 1916-20.
Chronicon maroniticum, ed. CHABOT = *Chronicon maroniticum*, ed. J.B. CHABOT, in: *Chronica minora* I. Parisiis 1903.
Chronicon paschale, ed. DINDORF = *Chronicon paschale*, ed. L. DINDORF. Bonnae 1832.
Chronique de Matthieu d'Édesse, tr. DULAURIER = *Chronique de Matthieu d'Édesse*, tr. E. DULAURIER, in: BiblHArm. Paris 1858.
CLEMENS, *De virginitate*, éd. LEFORT = «Le 'De virginitate' de S. Clément ou de S. Athanase?», éd. L.T. LEFORT, in. Mus XL(1927).
CLEMENS, *De virginitate*, ed. BEELEN = *S.P.N. Clementis Romani epistolae binae de virginitate*, ed. J.T. BEELEN. Lovanii 1856.
CLEMONS, «Checklist» = J.T. CLEMONS, «Checklist of the Syriac Manuscripts in the United States and Canada», in: OCP XXXI(1965).
Collectio documentorum, ed. RAHMANI = *Collectio documentorum hactenus inedita*, ed. I.E. RAHMANI. Sharfeh 1904.
COLLESS, «The Biography of John Saba» = B. COLLESS, «The Biography of John Saba», in: PdOr III(1972).
COLLESS, «The Mysticism of John Saba» = B. COLLESS, «The Mysticism of John Saba», in: OCP XXXIX(1973).
COULBEAUX, *Histoire politique et religieuse d'Abyssinie* = J.B. COULBEAUX, *Histoire politique et religieuse d'Abyssinie*. Paris 1928.
CSCO = Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium. Paris-Louvain.
CSCO Subs = CSCO Subsidia.
Conciliorum omn. collectio, ed. MANSI = *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, ed. J.D. MANSI. Florentiae 1759ff.
CYRILLOS OF SCYTHOPOLIS, *Vita Euthymii*, ed. SCHWARTZ = KYRILLOS VON SKYTHOPOLIS, *Vita Euthymii*, ed. E. SCHWARTZ, in: TuU XLIX, 2. Leipzig 1939.
CRAIaBL = Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres. Paris.
DAksE = Deutsche Aksum Expedition. Berlin.
DE HALLEUX, «Monophysitismus und Spiritualität» = A. DE HALLEUX, «Monophysitismus und Spiritualität nach dem Johanneskommentar des Philoxenus von Mabbug», in: ThuPh LXXX(1978).
DE HALLEUX, *Philoxène de Mabbog* = A. DE HALLEUX, *Philoxène de Mabbog. Sa vie, ses écrits, sa théologie*. Louvain 1963.
DELEHAYE, *Les saints stylites* = H. DELEHAYE, *Les saints stylites*, in: SH XIV. Bruxelles 1923.

DE VAUX, «La légende de Bahira» = CARRA DE VAUX, «La légende de Bahira», in: ROC II(1897).
DE VOGÜÉ, *Syrie Centrale* = M. DE VOGÜÉ, *Syrie Centrale: architecture civile et religieuse du Ier au 7e s.* I-II. Paris 1865-77.
DENḤĀ, *Histoire de Marouta*, éd. NAU = DENḤĀ, *Histoire de Marouta, métropolitain de Tagrit et de tout L'Orient*, éd. F. NAU, in: PO III. Paris 1905.
DEVREESSE, «Le christianisme dans la Province d'Arabie» = R. DEVREESSE, «Le christianisme dans la Province d'Arabie», in: Vivre et Penser II(1942).
DEVREESSE, *Le patriarcat d'Antioche* = R. DEVREESSE, *Le patriarcat d'Antioche depuis la paix de l'Église jusqu'à la conquête arabe*. Paris 1945.
DdSpir = Dictionnaire de spiritualité. Paris.
The Didascalia Apostolorum in Syriac I-IV, ed. VÖÖBUS = *The Didascalia Apostolorum in Syriac* I-IV, ed. A. VÖÖBUS, in: CSCO Scr. Syr. CLXXV-CLXXVI, CLXXIX-CLXXX. Louvain 1979.
DHeGE = Dictionnaire d'Histoire et de Géographie ecclésiastiques. Paris.
DENYS DE TELL MAHRÉ, *Chronique*, éd. CHABOT = *Chronique de Denys de Tell-Mahré quatrième partie*, éd. J.B. CHABOT. Paris 1895.
Documenta ad illustrandam historiam, ed. ROSSINI = *Documenta ad illustrandam historiam*, ed. K. CONTI ROSSINI. Romae 1909.
Documenta ad origines Monoph. illustrandas, ed. CHABOT = *Documenta ad origines Monophysitarum illustrandas*, ed. J.B. CHABOT, in: CSCO Scr. Syri LII. Lovanii 1933.
DÖLGER, «Der Durchzug durch den Jordan» = F.J. DÖLGER, «Der Durchzug durch den Jordan als Sinnbild der christlichen Taufe» in: *Antike und Christentum* II (1930) 70-79.
DÖRRIES, *Symeon von Mesopotamien* = H. DÖRRIES, *Symeon von Mesopotamien. Die Überlieferung der messalianischen «Makarius» - Schriften*, in: TuU Berlin 1941.
DOWNEY, «Ephraemius, Patriarch of Antioch» = G. DOWNEY, «Ephraemius, Patriarch of Antioch», in: CHist VII(1938).
DOZY, *Supplément* = R. DOZY, *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes* I-II. Leyden 1881.
DRAGUET, «Une pastorale anti-julianiste» = R. DRAGUET, «Une pastorale anti-julianiste des environs de l'année 530», in: Mus XL(1927).
DUNCAN, *Baptism in the Demonstrations* = E.J. DUNCAN, *Baptism in the Demonstrations of Aphraates the Persian Sage*. Washington 1945.
DUSSAUD, *Topographie historique de la Syrie antique* = R. DUSSAUD, *Topographie historique de la Syrie antique et médiévale*. Paris 1927.
DUSSAUD - MACLER, *Rapport sur une mission* = E. DUSSAUD et F. MACLER, *Rapport sur une mission dans les régions désertiques de la Syrie moyenne*, in: NArchMSL X. Paris 1903.
DUSSAUD - MACLER, *Voyage archéologique* = R. DUSSAUD et F. MACLER, *Voyage archéologique au Ṣafâ et dans le Djebel al-Drūz*. Paris 1901.
DUVAL, *Littérature syriaque* = R. DUVAL, *Littérature syriaque*. Paris 1907.
EchO = *Échos d'Orient*.
EDELBY, «L'autonomie législative des chrétiens en terre d'Islam» N. EDELBY, «L'autonomie législative des chrétiens en terre d'Islam», in: ArchHDO V(1960-51).

EDSMAN, *Le baptême de feu* = C.M. EDSMANS, *Le baptême de feu*. Leipzig-Uppsala 1940.
ELI DE QARTAMĪN, *Memra sur Philoxène*, éd. DE HALLEUX = ELI DE QARTAMĪN, *Memra sur S. Mar Philoxène de Mabbog*, éd. A. DE HALLEUX, in: CSCO Scr. Syri C. Louvain 1963.
ELIYĀ BAR ŠINĀYĀ, «Ein Brief über die Wahl des Išoʿjahb IV», hrsg. VON VANDENHOFF = «Ein Brief des Elias bar Šinaja über die Wahl des Katholikos Išōʿjahb IV», hrsgg. von B. VANDENHOFF, in: OrChr NS III(1913).
ELIYĀ BAR ŠINĀYĀ, *Opus chronologicum*, ed. CHABOT = *Eliae metropolitae Nisibeni opus chronologicum*, ed. J.B. CHABOT, in: CSCO Scr. Syr. XXII. Parisiis 1909.
ELIYĀ BAR ŠINĀYĀ, *Vita Johannis episcopi Tellae*, ed. BROOKS = *Vitae virorum apud monophysitas celeberrimorum*, ed. E.W. BROOKS, in: CSCO Scr. Syri VII. Parisiis 1907.
Ἑλληνικὸς φιλολογικὸς Σύλλογος, ed. PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS = Ἑλληνικὸς φιλολογικὸς Σύλλογος XVIII, ed. PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS. Constantinople 1884.
ʿENĀNIŠŌʿ, *The Book of Paradise*, ed. BUDGE = *The Book of Paradise Being the Histories and Sayings of the Monks and Ascetics of the Egyptian Desert by Palladius, Hieronymus and Others. The Syriac Text According to the Recension of ʿAnān-Ishō of Bēth ʿAbhe*, ed. E.A.W. BUDGE. London 1904.
EncIran = Encyclopaedia Iranica.
EPIPHANIOS, *Panarion*, ed. HOLL = EPIPHANIUS, *Panarion*, ed. K. HOLL, in: GChS XXV, XXXI, XXXVII. Leipzig 1915-33.
Epistolae imperatorum, pontificum, aliorum, ed. GÜNTHER = *Epistolae imperatorum, pontificum, aliorum*, ed. O. GÜNTHER, in: CSEL XXXV.
EUTYCHIUS, *Annales* I, ed. CHEIKHO = *Eutychii patriarchae Alexandrini annales*, ed. L. CHEIKHO, in: CSCO Scr. Arab. VII. Parisiis 1906.
EUTYCHIUS, *Annales* II, ed. CHEIKHO - DE VAUX - ZAYYAT = *Eutychii patriarchae Alexandrini annales*, ed. L. CHEIKHO, B. CARRA DE VAUX et H. ZAYYAT, in: CSCO Scr. Arab. IX. Parisiis 1909.
EVAGRIOS, *Commentarius in Psalmos*, ed. MIGNE = *Evagrii commentarius in Psalmos*, ed. J.P. MIGNE, in: PG XII.
EVAGRIOS, *La grande lettre à Mélanie*, éd. VITESTAM = *Seconde partie du traité qui passe sous le nom de «La grande lettre d'Évagre le Pontique à Mélanie l'Ancienne»*, éd. G. VITESTAM. Lund 1964.
EVAGRIOS, *Opera*, ed. MIGNE = *Evagrii opera*, ed. J.P. MIGNE, in: PG XL.
EVAGRIOS PONTICUS, ed. FRANKENBERG = *Evagrius Ponticus*, hrsgg. von W. FRANKENBERG, in: AbhGWG XIII, 2. Berlin 1912.
EVAGRIOS, *Practicos*, éd. GUILLAUMONT I-II = ÉVAGRE, *Practicos*, éd. A. et C. GUILLAUMONT I-II. Paris.
EVAGRIOS, *Les six centuries*, éd. GUILLAUMONT = *Les six centuries des «Kephalaia Gnostica»*, ed. A. GUILLAUMONT, in: PO XXVIII, 1. Paris 1959.

EVAGRIOS, *Srboy hawrn Ewagri*, ed. SARGHISIAN = *Srboy hawrn Ewagri Pontaṣwoy vark ew matenagrowtiwnk*, ed. H. B. SARGHISIAN. Venetik 1907.

EVAGRIOS, *Traité Pratique*, tr. GUILLAUMONT = ÉVAGRE, *Traité Pratique ou le moine*, tr. A. et C. GUILLAUMONT, in: SChr. Paris 1971.

EVAGRIOS SCHOLASTICUS, *Historia eccl.*, ed. BIDEZ-PARMENTIER = EVAGRIUS SCHOLASTICUS, *Historia ecclesiastica*, ed. J. BIDEZ et L. PARMENTIER. London 1898.

EUSEBIOS, *Historia eccl.*, ed. SCHWARTZ = EUSEBIUS, *Historia ecclesiastica*, ed. E. SCHWARTZ, GChS IX. Leipzig 1903.

EWING, «Greek and Other Inscriptions» = W. EWING, «Greek and Other Inscriptions Collected in Hauran», in: PalEF (1895).

AL-FAKHRI, *Histoire des dynasties musulmanes*, tr. AMAR = *Histoire des dynasties musulmanes, par Ibn at-Tiqtaqa*, tr. E. AMAR, in: ArchMar XVI. Paris 1910.

AL-FARISI, *Viae regnorum*, ed. DE GOEJE = AL-FARISI, *Viae regnorum. Descriptio ditionis moslemicae*, ed. M. I. DE GOEJE. Lugduni Batavorum 1873.

FATTAL, *Le statut légal des non-musulmans* = A. FATTAL, *Le statut légal des non-musulmans en pays d'Islam*. Beyrouth 1958.

FIEY, *Assyrie chrétienne* I-III = J.M. FIEY, *Assyrie chrétienne* I-III. Beyrouth 1965-68.

FIEY, «La Démonstration XIV d'Aphrahate» = J. M. FIEY, «Notule de littérature syriaque. La Démonstration XIV d'Aphraate», in: Mus LXXXI (1968).

FIEY, *Chrétiens syriaques sous les Abbassides* = J. M. FIEY, *Chrétiens syriaques sous les Abbassides surtout à Bagdad* (749-1258), in: CSCO Subs LIX. Louvain 1980.

FISCHER, *Christliche Klöster in muhammedanischen Ländern* = A. FISCHER, *Christliche Klöster in muhammedanischen Ländern in der Blütezeit des Chalifats*, in: BerVSächAW LXXXI, 3. Leipzig 1929.

FREND, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement* = W. H. C. FREND, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement*. London 1972.

FROTHINGHAM, *Stephen bar Sudhaili* = A. L. FROTHINGHAM, *Stephen bar Sudhaili, the Syrian Mystic (c. 500 A.D.) and the Book of Hierotheos on the Hidden Treasures of the Divinity*. Leyden 1886.

FuF = *Forschungen und Fortschritte*.

AL-ĞAHŠIYĀRĪ, *Kitāb al-wuzarā'*, ed. VON MŽIK = ABŪ 'ABDALLĀH MUḤĀMMAD IBN 'ABDUS AL-ĞAHŠIYĀRĪ, *Kitāb al-wuzarā' wa-l-kuttāb*, ed. H. VON MŽIK. Leipig 1926.

GALBIATI, «I fondi orientali» = E. GALBIATI, «I fondi orientali minori (siriaco, etiopico, armeno) dell' Ambrosiana», in: AttiCSLO (1963).

GChS = Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte. Leipzig.

GELINEAU, «Données liturgiques contenues dans les sept madroshê = J. GELINEAU, «Données liturgiques contenues dans les sept madroshê 'De la nuit' de Saint Éphrem», in: OrSyr V(1960).

GELZER, «Ungedruckte und wenig bekannte Bistümer-Verzeichnisse» = H. GELZER, «Ungedruckte und wenig bekannte Bistümer-Verzeichnisse der orientalischen Kirche», in: ByzZ I(1892).

GENNADIUS, *De viris illustribus*, ed. RICHARDSON = GENNADIUS, *De viris illustribus*, ed. E. C. RICHARDSON, in: TuU XIV. Leipzig 1896.

GREGORIOS HAMARTOLOS, *Chronicon*, ed. DE MURALT = GREGORIOS HAMARTOLOS. *Chronicon ab orbe condito ad annum p. Chr.* 842, ed. E. DE MURALT. Petropoli 1859.

GERO, *Barṣauma of Nisibis* = S. GERO, *Barṣauma of Nisibis and Persian Christianity in the Fifth Century*, in: CSCO Sub LXIII. Louvain 1981.

Gesta pontificorum Romanorum, ed. MOMMSEN = *Gesta pontificorum Romanorum*, ed. T. MOMMSEN. Berolini 1874.

GGA = Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen. Göttingen.

AL-GAZZĀLĪ, *Buch vom Gottesvertrauen*, übers. WEHR = *al-Gazzālī's Buch vom Gottesvertrauen. Das 35. Buch des Iḥyā*, übers. von H. WEHR. Halle 1940.

GĪWARGĪ, *Poemi siriaci*, ed. RYSSEL = *Poemi siriaci di Giorgio vescovo degli arabi*, ed. V. RYSSEL, in: RendRAL CCLXXXIII. Roma 1892.

GOSHEN-GOTTSTEIN, *Syriac Manuscripts* = M. H. GOSHEN-GOTTSTEIN, *Syriac Manuscripts in the Harvard College Library: A Catalogue*, in: HarvSemSt XXIII. Missoula 1979.

The Gospel of Thomas, éd. GUILLAUMONT - PUECH - QUISPEL - TILL - 'ABD AL-MASIḤ = *The Gospel of Thomas*, éd. A. GUILLAUMONT, H.C. PUECH, G. QUISPEL, W. TILL and YASSAH 'ABD AL-MASIḤ. Leiden - New York 1959.

GöttOr = Göttinger Orientforschungen. I Reihe: Syriaca. Wiesbaden.

GRAF, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur* I-V = G. GRAF, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur* I-V, in: SeT CXVIII-CLXXII. Città del Vaticano 1933-53.

GRAF, «Die literarischen Handschriften», see BAUMSTARK, «Die literarischen Handschriften».

GRAFFIN, «Les hymnes sur la perle d'Éphrem» = F. GRAFFIN, «Les hymnes sur la perle de saint Éphrem», in: OSyr XII(1967).

GRAFFIN, «La lettre de Philoxène à un supérieur de monastère» = F. GRAFFIN, «La lettre de Philoxène de Mabboug à un supérieur de monastère sur la vie monastique», in: OSyr VI(1961), VII(1962).

Gregorii Nysseni opera ascetica, ed. JAEGER - CAVARNOS - CALLAHAN = *Gregorii Nysseni opera ascetica*, ed. W. JAEGER, J.P. CAVARNOS et V. W. CALLAHAN VIII. Leiden 1952.

GRIBOMONT, «Les homélies de Philoxène de Mabboug et l'écho du Messalianisme» = J. GRIBOMONT, «Les homélies ascétiques de Philoxène de Mabboug et l'écho du Messalianisme», in: OrSyr II(1967).

GRILL, «Eine unbekannte syrische Handschrift» = S. GRILL, «Eine unbekannte syrische Handschrift in Wien», in: OrChr L(1966).

GUIDI, *L'Arabie antéislamique* = I. GUIDI, *L'Arabie antéislamique*. Paris 1921.

GUIDI, «La chiesa abissina» = I. GUIDI, «La chiesa abissina», in: OrMod II(1922).

GUILLAUMONT, «Les 'arrhes de l'Esprit' dans le Livre des Degrés» = A. GUILLAUMONT, «Les 'arrhes de l'Esprit' dans le Livre des Degrés», in: Mémorial Mgr Gabriel Khouri-Sarkis. Louvain 1969.

GUILLAUMONT, «Evagrius» = A. GUILLAUMONT, «Evagrius», in: RAC VI.

GUILLAUMONT, Les «Kephalaia Gnostica» d'Évagre = A. GUILLAUMONT, Les «Kephalaia Gnostica» d'Évagre le Pontique. Paris 1962.

GUILLAUMONT, «Νηστεύειν τὸν κόσμον» = A. GUILLAUMONT, «Νηστεύειν τὸν κόσμον», in: BullIFAO LXI(1962).

GUILLAUMONT, «Situation et signification du 'Liber Gradum' dans la spiritualité syriaque», in: OrChrAn CXCVII (1974).

HAGE, *Die syrisch-jakobitische Kirche* = W. HAGE, *Die syrisch-jakobitische Kirche in frühislamischer Zeit nach orientalischen Quellen*. Wiesbaden 1966.

HAMMERSCHMIDT, *Äthiopien* = E. HAMMERSCHMIDT, *Äthiopien*. Wiesbaden 1967.

HARB, «L'attitude de Philoxène» = P. HARB, «L'attitude de Philoxène de Mabboug à l'égard de la spiritualité 'savante' d'Évagre le Pontique», in: Mémorial Mgr Gabriel Khouri-Sarkis. Louvain 1969.

HARB, «Les origines de la doctrine de la 'Lā Ḥašūšūta'» = P. HARB, «Les origines de la doctrine de la 'Lā Ḥašūšūta' (Apatheia) chez Philoxène de Mabboug», in: PdO V(1974).

HARB, «Die Unechtheit des Philoxenos-Briefes über die 3 Stufen» = P. HARB, «Die Unechtheit des Philoxenos-Briefes über die drei Stufen des monastischen Lebens» in ZDMG Suppl. I (1969).

HARNACK, *Mission und Ausbreitung* I-II = A. VON HARNACK, *Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den drei ersten Jahrhunderten* I-II. Leipzig 1924.

HARNACK, *Marcion* = A. VON HARNACK, *Marcion*, in: TuU XLV. Leipzig 1921.

HarvSemSt = Harvard Semitic Studies. Missoula.

AL-HĀŠIMI, *Risāla ilā al-Kindī* = AL-HĀŠIMI, *Risāla ilā ʿAbd al-Masīh al-Kindī*. Cairo 1895.

HASSAN AL-BASRI, *Adab ul-kuttab*, ed. AL-ATARI-AL-ALUSI = HASSAN AL-BASRI, *Adab al-kuttab*, ed. B. AL-ATARI and M. S. AL-ALUSI. Cairo 1341 H.

HAUSHERR, «Aux origines de la mystique syriaque» = I. HAUSHERR, «Aux origines de la mystique syriaque: Grégoire de Chypre ou Jean de Lycopolis», in: OChrP IV(1938).

HAUSHERR, «Contemplation et sainteté» = I. HAUSHERR, «Contemplation et sainteté. Une remarquable mise au point par Philoxène de Mabboug († 523)», in: RAeM XIV(1933).

HAUSHERR, «De doctrina spirituali chr. orientalium» = I. HAUSHERR, «De doctrina spirituali christianorum orientalium: quaestiones et scripta», in: OrientChr. XXX(1933).

HAUSHERR, «Les débuts de la littérature mystique syriaque» = I. HAUSHERR, «Les débuts de la littérature mystique syriaque», in: Actes du XXe Congrès International des Orientalistes. Louvain 1940.

HAUSHERR, «L'erreur fondamentale du messalianisme» = I. HAUSHERR, «L'erreur fondamentale et la logique du messalianisme», in: OChrP I (1935).

HAUSHERR, «Les grands courants de la spiritualité orientale» = I. HAUSHERR, «Les grands courants de la spiritualité orientale», in: OChrP I(1934).

HAUSHERR, «Le messalianisme» = I. HAUSHERR, «Le messalianisme», in: Atti del XIX Congresso Internationale degli Orientalisti. Roma 1938.

HAUSHERR, «Quaenam aetate prodierit 'Liber Graduum'» = I. HAUSHERR, «Quaenam aetate prodierit 'Liber Graduum'», in: OChrP I(1935).

HAUSHERR, «Un grand auteur spirituel retrouvé: Jean d'Apamée» = I. HAUSHERR, «Un grand auteur spirituel retrouvé: Jean d'Apamée», in: OChrP XIV (1948).

HdO = Handbuch der Orientalistik. Leiden - Köln.

HeyJ = *The Heytrop Journal.*

Histoire d'Ahoudemmeh, éd. NAU = *Histoire d'Ahoudemmeh, apôtre des Arabes de Mésopotamie*, éd. F. NAU, in: PO III, 1. Paris 1905.

Histoire de Yahya ibn Saïd, éd. KRATCHKOVSKY-VASILIEV = *Histoire de Yahya ibn Saïd d'Antioche*, éd. I. KRATCHKOVSKY et A. VASILIEV, in: PO XVIII, 5. Paris 1924.

Histoire du couvent de Sabrišo, éd. MINGANA = *Histoire du couvent de Sabrišo*, éd. A. MINGANA, in: Sources syriaques I.

Histoire nestorienne, éd. SCHER - PÉRIER - DIB - GRIVEAU = *Histoire nestorienne*, éd. A. SCHER, J. PÉRIER, P. DIB, R. GRIVEAU, in: PO IV, 3; V, 2; VII, 2; XIII, 4. Paris 1907-14.

HITTI, *The Origins of the Islamic State* = P.K. HITTI, *The Origins of the Islamic State*. New York 1916.

HONIGMANN, *Le couvent de Barṣaumā* = E. HONIGMANN, *Le couvent de Barṣaumā et le patriarcat jacobite d'Antioche et de Syrie*, in: CSCO Subs VII. Louvain 1954.

HONIGMANN, *Évêques et évêchés Monophysites* = E. HONIGMANN, *Évêques et évêchés Monophysites d'Asie antérieure au Ve siècle*, in: CSCO Subs II. Louvain 1951.

HONIGMANN, «Nordsyrische Klöster in vorarabischer Zeit» = E. HONIGMANN, «Nordsyrische Klöster in vorarabischer Zeit», in: ZfSem I(1922).

HUART, *Histoire des Arabes* = HUART, *Histoire des Arabes*. Paris 1912.

IBN ʿASĀKIR, *History* I = IBN ʿASĀKIR, *History* I.

IBN ACH-CHINNA, *Les perles choisies*, tr. SAUVAGET = IBN ACH-CHINNA, *Les perles choisies*, tr. J. SAUVAGET. Beyrouth 1933.

IBN ḤAWQAL, *Ṣurat al-Arḍ*, ed. KRAMERS = IBN ḤAWQAL, *Ṣurat al-Arḍ*, ed. J.H. KRAMERS.

IBN ISḤAQ, *Sīra*, tr. GUILLAUME = IBN ISḤAQ, *Sīra*, tr. A. GUILLAUME. London 1955.

IBN KHALLIKĀN, *Biographical Dictionary* I = IBN KHALLIKĀN, *Biographical Dictionary* I.

IBN AS-SALT, *Traités religieux*, éd. SBATH = IBN AS-SALT, *Traités religieux, philosophiques et moraux*, éd. P. SBATH. Le Caire 1934.

IMRU'UL-QAIS, *Mu'allaqa* = IMRU'UL-QAIS, *Mu'allaqa*.
INNOCENTIUS DE MARONIA, *Epistola de collatione cum Severianis habita*, ed. SCHWARZ = INNOCENTIUS DE MARONIA, *Epistola de collatione cum Severianis habita*, ed. E. SCHWARZ In: Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum IV, 2.
InsFAB = Institut Français d'Archéologie de Beyrouth. Bibliothèque Archéologique et Historique.
InstOr = Institut Orientaliste. Louvain.
ISḤĀQ OF ANTIOCH, *Homiliae* I, ed. BEDJAN = *Homiliae S. Isaaci Syri Antiocheni* I, ed. P. BEDJAN. Parisiis 1903.
ISḤĀQ OF ANTIOCH, *Opera omnia* I-II, ed. BICKELL = *S. Isaaci Antiocheni doctoris Syrorum opera omnia*, ed. G. BICKELL. Gissae 1873-77.
ISḤĀQ OF NINIVEH, *De perfectione religiosa*, ed. BEDJAN = *Mar Isaacus Ninivita, De perfectione religiosa*, ed. P. BEDJAN. Parisiis - Lipsiae 1909.
IŠŌ'DENAḤ, *Le livre de la chasteté*, éd. CHABOT = *Le livre de la chasteté composé par Jesusdenah évêque de Baçrah*, éd. J.B. CHABOT, in: MAH XVI. Paris 1896.
IŠŌ'YAHB III, *Liber epistularum*, ed. DUVAL = *Išō'yahb III patriarcha, Liber epistularum*, ed. R. DUVAL, in: CSCO Scr. Syri II. Parisiis 1904.
JA = *Journal Asiatique*. Paris.
Jacobi ep. Nisibeni sermones, ed. ANTONELLI = *S.P.N. Jacobi, episcopi Nisibeni sermones*, ed. N. ANTONELLI. Romae 1756.
AL-JĀḤIZ, *Risāla fī l-redd 'ala-l-naṣāra*, ed. FINKEL = *Three Essays of Abū 'Othmān 'Amr ibn Baḥr al-Jāḥiz*, ed. FINKEL. Cairo 1926.
JALABERT-MOUTERDE, *Inscriptions grecques et latines* = L. JALABERT et R. MOUTERDE, *Inscriptions grecques et latines de Syrie*. Paris 1939.
JAOS = *Journal of the American Oriental Society*.
JANSMA, «Aphraates' Demonstration VII, 18 and 20» = T. JANSMA, «Aphraates' Demonstratio VII, 18 and 20: Some Observations on the Discourse on Penance», in: PdO V(1974).
JANSMA, «Philoxenus' Letter to Abraham and Orestes = T. JANSMA, «Philoxenus' Letter to Abraham and Orestes Concerning Stephen bar Sudaili: Some Proposals with Regard to the Correction of the Syriac Text and the English Translation», in: Mus LXXXVII(1974).
JA'QŌB OF SERŪG, *Epistulae*, ed. OLINDER = *Jacobi Sarugensis epistulae quotquot supersunt*, ed. G. OLINDER, in: CSCO Scr. Syri LVII. Louvain 1937.
JA'QŌB OF SERŪG, *Homiliae* I-V, ed. BEDJAN = *Homiliae selectae Mar Jacobi Sarugensis* I-V, ed. P. BEDJAN. Parisiis 1905-10.
JbAuC = Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum. Bonn.
JbLitW = Jahrbuch für Liturgiewissenschaft.
JdSav = *Journal des Savants*.
JNES = *Journal of Near Eastern Studies. Chicago*.
JŌḤANNĀN BAR QURSOS, *Canones*, ed. KUBERCZYK = *Canones Johannis bar Cursus*, ed. C. KUBERCZYK. Lipsiae 1901.
JŌḤANNĀN OF DALYATHĀ, *La collection des lettres*, éd. BEULAY = *La collection des lettres de Jean de Dalyatha*, ed. R. BEULAY, in: PO XXIX, 3. Paris 1978.

JŌḤANNĀN THE SOLITARY, *Briefe*, hrsgg. von RIGNELL = *Briefe von Johannes des Einsiedler*, hrsgg. von L. G. RIGNELL. Lund 1941.
JŌḤANNĀN THE SOLITARY, *Drei Traktate*, hrsgg. RIGNELL = *Drei Traktate von Johannes des Einsiedlers*, hrsgg. von G. RIGNELL, in: LUA NF LIV. Lund 1964.
JŌḤANNĀN OF APAMEA, hrsgg. von STROTHMANN = *Johannes von Apamea*, hrsgg. von W. STROTMANN, in: PTaS II. Berlin - New York 1972.
JŌḤANNĀN OF LYCOPOLIS, *Ein Dialog über die Seele*, hrsgg. von DEDERLING = *Johannes von Lykopolis, Ein Dialog über die Seele und die Affekte des Menschen*, hrsgg. von S. DEDERING. Uppsala 1936.
JŌḤANNĀN OF EPHESUS, *Historia eccl.*, ed. BROOKS = *Johannis Ephesini historiae ecclesiasticae pars tertia*, ed. E. W. BROOKS, in: CSCO Scr. Syri LV Louvain 1936.
JŌḤANNĀN OF EPHESUS, *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, ed. BROOKS = JOHN OF EPHESUS, *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, ed. E. W. BROOKS, in: PO XVII-XIX. Paris 1923-25.
JOHANNES IV, *Oratio de disciplina monastica*, ed. MIGNE = *Johanni Antiocheni oratio de Disciplina monastica*, ed. J. P. MIGNE, in: PG CXXXII.
JOHANNES CHRYSOSTOMOS, *Homiliae de statuis*, ed. MIGNE = JOHANNES CHRYSOSTOMOS, *Homiliae de statuis*, ed. J. P. MIGNE, in: PG XLIX.
JOHANNES MALALAS, *Chronographia*, ed. DINDORF = JOHANNES MALALAS, *Chronographia*, ed. L. DINDORF. Bonnae 1831.
JOHN OF NIKIOU, *Chronique*, éd. ZOTENBERG = JEAN DE NIKIOU, *Chronique* éd. H. ZOTENBERG. Paris 1876.
JONES-MONROE, *A History of Abyssinia* = A. H. H. JONES and E. MONROE, *A History of Abyssinia*. Oxford 1935.
JSemSt = *Journal of Semitic Studies*. Manchester.
JThS = *Journal of Theological Studies*. Oxford.
JÜLICHER, «Zur Geschichte der Monophysitenkirche» = A. JÜLICHER, «Zur Geschichte der Monophysitenkirche», in: ZntW XIX(1925).
JUSTINUS MARTYR, *Apologia* I, ed. MIGNE = JUSTINUS MARTYR, *Apologia I pro Christianis*, ed. J. P. MIGNE, in: PG VI.
JUSTINUS MARTYR, *Dialogus*, ed. GOODSPEED = JUSTINUS MARTYR, *Dialogus*, ed. E. J. GOODSPEED, Göttingen 1914.
JUYNBOLL, *Handbuch des islamischen Gesetzes* = T. W. JUYNBOLL, *Handbuch des islamischen Gesetzes*. Leiden - Leipzig 1908-10.
KAMIL, *Catalogue* = M. KAMIL, *Catalogue of all Manuscripts in the Monastery of St. Catharine on Mount Sinai*. Wiesbaden 1970.
KAMMERER, *Essai sur l'histoire antique d'Abyssinie* = A. KAMMERER, *Essai sur l'histoire antique d'Abyssinie*. Paris 1926.
KAYSER, *Canones Jacob's von Edessa* = C. KAYSER, *Die Canones Jacob's von Edessa übersetzt und erläutert*. Leipzig 1886.
KEMMER, *Charisma maximum* = A. KEMMER, *Charisma maximum. Eine Untersuchung zu Cassians Vollkommenheitslehre und seiner Stellung zum Messalianismus*. Einsiedeln 1938.
KHALIFÉ-HACHEM, «Isaac de Ninive» = E. KHALIFÉ-HACHEM, «Isaac de Ninive», in: DdSpir.

KHALIFÉ-HACHEM, «La prière pure et la prière spirituelle» = E. KHALIFÉ-HACHEM, «La prière pure et la prière spirituelle selon Isaac de Ninive», in: Mémorial Mgr Gabriel Khouri-Sarkis. Louvain 1969.

AL-KINDĪ, *The Apology*, tr. MUIR = *The Apology of al-Kindy, Written at the Court of al-Māmūn in Defence of Christianity against Islam*, tr. W. MUIR. London 1882.

KMOSKO, *De apocrypha quadam Dominici baptismi* = M. KMOSKO, *De apocrypha quadam Dominici baptismi descriptione corollarium*, in: PO VI. 1911.

KOSMAS INDIOPLEUSTES, *Topographia christiana*, ed. MIGNE = KOSMAS INDIOPLEUSTES, *Topographia christiana*, ed. J.P. MIGNE, in: PG LXXXVIII.

KRAUSS, *Talmudische Archeologie* = S. KRAUSS, *Talmudische Archeologie*.

KRÜGER, «Mönchtum im Tur ʿAbdin» = P. KRÜGER, «Das syrisch-monophysitische Mönchtum im Tur ʿAbdin», in: OChrP IV(1938).

LAMMENS, «L'ancienne frontière entre la Syrie et le Ḥiğāz» = H. LAMMENS, «L'ancienne frontière entre la Syrie et le Ḥiğāz».

LAMMENS, «Anciens couvents de l'Auranitide» = H. LAMMENS, «Anciens couvents de l'Auranitide», in: ROC VIII(1903).

LAMMENS, «Le Calife Walīd et le partage de la mosquée des Omayyades» = H. LAMMENS, «Le Calife Walīd et le partage de la mosquée des Omayyades à Damas», in: *Études sur le siècle des Omayyades*.

LAMMENS, *Études sur le règne du calife Omaiyade Moʿawai Ier* = H. LAMMENS, *Études sur le règne du calife Omaiyade Moʿawia Ier*, in: MelUnivSJ III. Beyrouth 1908.

LAMMENS, *Études sur le siècle des Omayyades* = H. LAMMENS, *Études sur le siècle des Omayyades*. Beyrouth 1930.

LAMMENS, «Les chrétiens de la Mecque à la veille de l'hégire = H. LAMMENS, «Les chrétiens de la Mecque à la veille de l'hégire», in: BullIFArchO XVIII(1918).

LAMY, *Dissertatio de fide et disciplina* = T.J. LAMY, *Dissertatio de fide et disciplina in re Eucharistica*. Lovanii 1859.

LAMY, «Profession de foi adressée par les abbés» = T.J. LAMY, «Profession de foi adressée par les abbés des couvents de la province d'Arabie à Jacques Baradée», in: *Actes du IIe Congrès international des orientalistes* IV. Paris 1899.

LASSUS, *Sanctuaires chrétiens de Syrie* = J. LASSUS, *Sanctuaires chrétiens de Syrie*. Paris 1947.

LAZAR OF PHARPI, *Patmowtʿiwn Hayoç*, ed. TER-MKRTCEAN - MALXASEAN = LAZAR OF PHARPI, *Patmowtʿiwn Hayoç*, ed. G. TER-MKRTCEAN and S. MALXASEAN. Tiflis 1904.

LEBON, «Éphrem d'Amid, patriarche d'Antioche» = J. LEBON, «Éphrem d'Amid, patriarche d'Antioche», in: Mélanges Ch. Moeller. Louvain 1914.

LEBON, *Le monophysisme Sévérien* = J. LEBON, *Le monophysisme Sévérien, Étude historique, littéraire et théologique sur la résistance monophysite du concile de Chalcédoine jusqu'à la constitution de l'Église jacobite*. Lovanii 1909.

LELOIR, *Doctrines et méthodes de S. Éphrem* = L. LELOIR, *Doctrines et méthodes de S. Éphrem d'après son commentaire de l'évangile concordant*, in: CSCO Sub XVIII. Louvain 1961.

LELOIR, «La pensée monastique d'Éphrem» = L. LELOIR, «La pensée monastique d'Éphrem et Martyrius» in: OrChrAn CXCVII(1974).

LEMOINE, «La spiritualité de Philoxène» = E. LEMOINE, «La spiritualité de Philoxène de Mabboug» in: OSyr 2(1957).

LESZYNSKY, *Die Juden in Arabien* = R. LESZYNSKY, *Die Juden in Arabien zur Zeit Mohammeds*. Berlin 1910.

LexMitt = Lexikon des Mittelalters. Zürich - München.

Liber graduum, ed. KMOSKO = *Liber graduum*, ed. M. KMOSKO, in: PS I, 3. Parisiis 1926.

LIETZMANN, *Geschichte der alten Kirche* IV = H. LIETZMANN, *Geschichte der alten Kirche* IV: *Die Zeit der Kirchenväter*. Berlin 1953.

LittCO = Littératures chrétiennes de l'Orient. Paris.

LITTMANN, «Sabaische, griechische und altabessinische Inschriften» = E. LITTMANN, «Sabaische, griechische und altabessinische Inschriften», in: DAKSE. Berlin 1913.

LITTMANN, *Syriac Inscriptions* = E. LITTMANN, *Syriac Inscriptions*, in: PublPUArchE IV, B. Leyden 1934.

LOUTH, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition* = A. LOUTH, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition*. Oxford 1981.

LUÅ = Lunds Universitets Årskrift. Lund.

LUCIAN OF SAMOSATA, *Hermotimos*, ed. JACOBITZ = *Luciani Samosatensis Hermotimos*, ed. JACOBITZ. Lipsiae 1884.

LUNDBERG, *La typologie baptismale* = P. LUNDBERG, *La typologie baptismale dans l'ancienne Église*. Uppsala 1942.

Macarii Anecdota, Seven Unpublished Homilies, ed. MARRIOTT = *Macarii Anecdota, Seven Unpublished Homilies of Macarius*, ed. G.L. MARRIOTT, in: HThS V. Cambridge 1918.

MACARIUS, *Neue Homilien*, ed. KLOSTERMANN - BERTHOLD = *Neue Homilien des Macarius/Symeon I. Aus Typus III*, hrsgg. E. KLOSTERMANN und H. BERTHOLD, in: TuU LXXII. Berlin 1961.

MACARIUS, *Die 50 geistlichen Homilien*, hrsgg. DÖRRIES - KLOSTERMANN - KROEGER = *Die 50 geistlichen Homilien des Makarius*, hrsgg. von H. DÖRRIES, E. KLOSTERMANN und M. KROEGER, in; PatrTuS IV. Berlin 1964.

MACLER, *Notice des manuscrits syriaques* = F. MACLER, *Notice des manuscrits syriaques conservés dans la bibliothèque du couvent des Syriens jacobites de Jérusalem*. Paris 1920.

MAH = Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire. Paris - Roma.

MAI, *Codices chaldaici* = A. MAI, *Codices chaldaici sive syriaci Vaticani Assemaniani*, in: SVNC V. Romae 1831.

AL-MAKIN, *Historia Saracenica*, tr. ERPENIUS = GEORGIUS ELMACINUS, *Historia Saracenica*, tr. T. ERPENIUS. Lugduni Batavorum 1625.

MAKRIZI, «Les couvents des chrétiens», tr. LEROY = «Makrizi: les couvents des chrétiens», tr. LEROY, in: ROC (1908).

A Manichaean Psalm-Book, ed. ALLBERRY = *A Manichaean Psalm-Book*, ed. G.R.C. ALLBERRY. Stuttgart 1938.

MARGOLIOUTH, *Descriptive List* = G. MARGOLIOUTH, *Descriptive List of Syriac and Karshunic Manuscripts in the British Museum Acquired Since 1873.* London 1899.
MARI, *De patriarchis nest. commentaria*, ed. GISMONDI = MARI, *De patriarchis nestorianorum commentaria*, ed. H. GISMONI. Romae 1899.
MARTIN, *Métrique chez les Syriens* = P. MARTIN, *De la métrique chez les Syriens*, in: AbhKM VII, 2. Leipzig 1879.
Martyrium Arethae = *Martyrium Arethae*, in: ActaSS Octobris X.
Martyrium Simeonis Bar Sabbaʿe, ed. KMOSKO = *Martyrium beati Simeonis Bar Sabbaʿe*, ed. M. KMOSKO, in: PS, 2. Parisiis 1907.
Martyrologes et ménologes orientaux, éd. NAU = *Martyrologes et ménologes orientaux*, éd. F. NAU, in: PO X, 1. Paris 1915.
MARŪTĀ OF MAIPHERQAṬ, *The Canons*, ed. VÖÖBUS = *The Canons Ascribed to Marūtā of Maipherqaṭ and Related Sources*, ed. A. VÖÖBUS, in: CSCO Scr. Syri CXCI. Louvain 1982.
MARŪTĀ, «Homilia de Dominica in Albis», ed. KMOSKO = «Marūtā Maipherkatensis homilia de Dominica in Albis», ed. M. KMOSKO, in: OrChr III(1903).
AL-MASʿŪDĪ, *Kitab at-Tanbih*, ed. DE GOEJE = AL-MASʿŪDĪ, *Kitab at-Tanbih wa'l-Išraf*, ed. M.I. DE GOEJE. Lugduni Batavorum 1894.
AL-MASʿŪDĪ, *Les prairies d'or* I-IX, tr. DE MEYNARD - DE COURTEILLE = MASʿŪDĪ, *Les prairies d'or* I-IX, tr. B. DE MEYNARD et P. DE COURTEILLE. Paris 1861-77.
AL-MĀWERDĪ, *Traité de droit public musulman* I-II, tr. OSTROLOG = EL-MĀWERDĪ, *Traité de droit public musulman* I-II, tr. L. OSTROLOG. Paris 1909.
MedLAvW = Mededeelingen der koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschapen, Afd. Letterkunde. Amsterdam.
MelUSJ = *Mélanges de l'Université Saint Joseph.* Beyrouth.
Μηναῖον II = Μηναῖον II. Venice 1612.
MERX, *Idee und Grundlinien einer allg. Geschichte der Mystik* = A. MERX, *Idee und Grundlinien einer allgemeinen Geschichte der Mystik.* Heidelberg 1893.
MICHAEL SYRUS, *Chronique* I-IV, éd. CHABOT = *Chronique de Michel le Syrien, patriarche jacobite d'Antioche 1166-1199*, I-IV, éd. J.B. CHABOT. Paris 1899-1924.
MINGANA, *Catalogue* = A. MINGANA, *Catalogue of the Mingana Collection of Manuscripts Now in the Possession of the Trustees of the Woobrooke Settlement, Selly Oak, Birmingham*, I. Cambridge 1933-39.
MINGANA, «New Documents on Philoxenus» = A. MINGANA, «New Documents on Philoxenus of Hierapolis and on the Philoxenian Version of the Bible», in: The Expositor VIII, XIX(1920).
MISKAWAIHI, *The Concluding Portion of the Experiences of the Nations* I-II, tr. MARGOLIOUTH = *The Concluding Portion of the Experiences of the Nations by Miskawaihi* I-II, tr. D.S. MARGOLIOUTH. Oxford 1921.
MittSOS = Mitteilungen des Seminars für orientalische Sprachen in Berlin. Zweite Abteilung: Westasiatische Studien. Berlin.
MonAethHag = Monumenta Aethiopica Hagiologica. Petropoli.

Monumenta syriaca I-II, ed. ZINGERLE, *Monumenta syriaca ex Romanis codd. collecta*, ed. P. ZINGERLE. Oeniponti 1869-78.
Morg = *Morgenland.*
MOSS, *Catalogue of Syriac Printed Books* = C. MOSS, *Catalogue of Syriac Printed Books and Related Literature in the British Museum.* London 1962.
MOUNAYER, «Les canons» = J. MOUNAYER, «Les canons relatifs aux moines attribués à Rabbula», in: OChrP XX(1954).
MRAccL = Memorie della Reale Accademia dei Lincei.
MUIR, *Annals of the Early Caliphate* = W. MUIR, *Annals of the Early Caliphate.* 1883.
MÜLLER, *Ehelosigkeit* = K. MÜLLER, *Ehelosigkeit aller Getauften in der alten Kirche.* Tübingen 1927.
MUQADDASI, *Descriptio imperii moslemici*, ed. DE GOEJE = AL-MOKADDASI, *Descriptio imperii musulmanici*, ed. M.I. DE GOEJE. Lugduni Batavorum 1906.
Mus = *Le Muséon*, Louvain.
MUSTAWFĪ OF QADZWĪN, *Nuzhat al-Qulūb*, tr. LE STRANGE = *Nuzhat al-Qulūb, Composed by Mustawfī of Qazwin*, tr. G. LE STRANGE. Leyden 1919.
NAGEL, «Zum Problem der Bundessöhne» = P. NAGEL, «Zum Problem der Bundessöhne bei Afrahat», in: FuF XXXV(1962).
NALLINO, *Raccolta di scritti editi e inediti* = C.A. NALLINO, *Raccolta di scritti editi e inediti*, ed. M. NALLINO. Roma 1941.
NArchMSL = Nouvelles Archives des Missions Scientifiques et Littéraires. Paris.
Narratio de Simeone Bar Sabbaʿe, ed. KMOSKO = *Narratio de S. Simeone Bar Sabbaʿe*, ed. M. KMOSKO, in: PS I, 2. Parisiis 1907.
NAUTIN, «Une nouvelle inscription grecque d'Ézana» = P. NAUTIN, «Une nouvelle inscription grecque d'Ézana, roi d'Axum», in: JdSav (1970).
NAU, *Concile d'Antioche, lettre d'Italie* = F. NAU, *Concile d'Antioche, lettre d'Italie, canons des saints Pères, de Philoxène, de Théodose, d'Anthime etc.* in: ALittCanS III. Paris 1909.
NAU, *Les Arabes chrétiens de Mésopotamie* = F. NAU, *Les Arabes chrétiens de Mésopotamie et de Syrie du VIe au VIIe siècle.* Paris 1933.
NAU, «Corrections et additions» = F. NAU, «Corrections et additions au catalogue des manuscrits syriaques de Paris», in: JA XI, V(1915).
NAU, «Les suffragants d'Antioche au milieu du VIe siècle» = F. NAU, «Les suffragants d'Antioche au milieu du VIe siècle», in: ROC XIV(1909).
NAU, *Les canons et résolutions canoniques* = F. NAU, *Les canons et les résolutions canoniques.* Paris 1906.
NAU, «Notices des manuscrits» = F. NAU, «Notices des manuscrits syriaques, éthiopiens et mandéens entrés à la Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris depuis l'édition des catalogues», in: ROC XVI(1911).
NEṢHĀNĀ, ed. BEDJAN = *Neṣhānā de-Mar Šemʿōn rešā de-Abīlē*, ed. P. BEDJAN, in: AMS IV. Parisiis 1894.
NIEBUHR, *Reisebeschreibung nach Arabien* I-II = C. NIEBUHR, *Reisebeschreibung nach Arabien und andern umliegenden Ländern* I-II. Kopenhagen 1778.
NILOS, *Opera*, ed. MIGNE = *Nili opera*, ed. J.P. MIGNE, in: PG LXXIX.

NILOS, *Un opuscule inédit*, éd. VAN DEN VEN = *Un opuscule inédit attribué à S. Nil*, ed. P. VAN DEN VEN, in: Mélanges Godefroid Kurth. Liège 1908.
NÖLDEKE, *Die Ghassanischen Fürsten* = T. NÖLDEKE, *Die Ghassanischen Fürsten aus dem Hause Gafra's*, in: AbhPrAW. Berlin 1887.
NÖLDEKE, «Zur Topographie und Geschichte des Damascenischen Gebietes» = T. NÖLDEKE, «Zur Topographie und Geschichte des Damascenischen Gebietes und Haurangegend», in: ZDMG XXIX(1875).
NOTH, «Möglichkeiten und Grenzen islamischer Toleranz» = A. NOTH, «Möglichkeiten und Grenzen islamischer Toleranz», in: Saeculum XXIX (1978).
NSzGT = Neue Studien zur Geschichte der Theologie und der Kirche. Berlin.
OATES, *Studies in the Ancient History of Northern Iraq* = D. OATES, *Studies in the Ancient History of Northern Iraq*. London 1968.
The Odes of Solomon, ed. HARRIS - MINGANA = *The Odes and Psalms of Solomon*, ed. J. R. HARRIS and A. MINGANA. Manchester 1916.
O'LEARY, *Arabia Before Muhammad* = DE LACY O'LEARY, *Arabia Before Muhammad*. London 1927.
OLINDER, *The Letters of Jacob of Sarug* = G. OLINDER, *The Letters of Jacob of Sarug: Comments on an Edition*, in: LUÅ NF. Lund - Leipzig 1939.
Opera selecta, ed. OVERBECK = *Ephraemi Syri, Rabulae, Balaei aliorumque opera selecta*, ed. J. J. OVERBECK. Oxonii 1865.
OrChrAn = Orientalia Christiana Analecta. Roma.
Opuscula monophysitica, ed. ŠANDA = *Opuscula monophysitica*, ed. A. ŠANDA. Beryti Phoenicum 1930.
OrChr = *Oriens Christianus*. Leipzig - Wiesbaden.
OrientChr = Orientalia Christiana. Roma.
OrLAnal = *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta*. Louvain.
OrMod = *Oriente Moderno*.
ORTIZ DE URBINA, *Patrologia syriaca* = I. ORTIZ DE URBINA, *Patrologia syriaca*. Romae 1958.
OSt = *Ostkirchliche Studien*. Würzburg.
OSyr = *L'Orient syrien*. Paris.
PalEF = Palestine Exploration Fund.
PALLADIOS, *Historia Lausiaca*, ed. BUTLER = *The Lausiac History of Palladius*, ed. C. BUTLER, in: TaS VI, 2. Cambridge 1904.
PALLADIOS, *Historia Lausiaca*, éd. AMELINEAU = PALLADE, *De Historia Lausiaca*, éd. E. AMELINEAU. Paris 1887.
PapETSE = Papers of the Estonian Theological Society in Exile. Stockholm.
PatrTuS = Patristische Texte und Studien. Berlin.
PdO = *Parole de l'Orient*. Kaslik.
PEETERS, «La vie de Rabboula» = P. PEETERS, «La vie de Rabboula, évêque d'Édesse», in: RechScRel XVIII(1928).
PEÑA - CASTELLANA - FERNANDEZ, *Les stylites syriens* = I. PEÑA, P. CASTELLANA et R. FERNANDEZ, *Les stylites syriens*. Jerusalem 1975.
PG = Patrologiae cursus completus. Series graeca, ed. J. P. MIGNE.
PERRY, *Six Months in a Syrian Monastery* = S. G. F. PERRY, *Six Months in a Syrian Monastery*. London 1895.

PETRUS IBN RAHIB, *Chronicon orientale*, ed. CHEIKHO = PETRUS IBN RAHIB, *Chronicon orientale*, ed. L. CHEIKHO, in: CSCO Scr. Arab. I. Parisiis 1903.
PHILOSTORGIOS, *Historia eccl.*, ed. BIDEZ = PHILOSTORGIUS, *Historia ecclesiastica*, ed. J. BIDEZ, in: GChrS XXI. Leipzig 1913.
PHILOXENOS, *Commentaire du Prologue johannique*, éd. DE HALLEUX = PHILOXÈNE DE MABBOG, *Commentaire du Prologue johannique*, éd. A. DE HALLEUX, in: CSCO scr Syri CLXV. Louvain 1977.
PHILOXENOS, *The Discourses*, ed. BUDGE = *The Discourses of Philoxenus, Bishop of Mabbog*, ed. E. A. W. BUDGE I-II. London 1894-95.
PHILOXENOS, *Fragments of the Commentaries*, ed. WATT = PHILOXENUS OF MABBUG, *Fragments of the Commentary on Matthew and Luke*, ed. J. W. WATT, in: CSCO Scr. Syri CLXXI. Louvain 1978.
PHILOXENOS, *Homélies*, tr. LEMOINE = PHILOXÈNE DE MABBOUG, *Homélies*, tr. E. LEMOINE, in: SChr XLIV. Paris 1956.
PHILOXENOS, *La lettera*, ed. GUIDI = *La lettera di Filosseno ai monaci di Tell Adda*, ed. I. GUIDI, in: RRAL XII. Roma 1884.
PHILOXENOS, *Lettre à Patricius*, éd. LAVENANT = PHILOXÈNE DE MABBUG, *Lettre à Patricius*, éd. R. LAVENANT, in: PO XXX, 5. Paris 1963.
PHILOXENOS, *The Matthew - Luke Commentary*, ed. FOX = *The Matthew - Luke Commentary of Philoxenus*, ed. D. J. FOX, in: SBLDiss XLIII. Missoula 1979.
PHILOXENOS, *Textes inédits*, éd. LEBON = *Textes inédits de Philoxène de Mabboug*, éd. J. LEBON, in: Mus XLIII(1930).
PHILOXENOS, *Three Letters*, ed. VASCHALDE = *Three letters of Philoxenus, Bishop of Mabbogh*, ed. A. VASCHALDE. Roma 1902.
PHILOXENOS, *Tractatus tres de Trinitate*, ed. VASCHALDE = *Philoxeni Mabbugensis tractatus tres de Trinitate et incarnatione*, ed. A. VASCHALDE, in: CSCO Scr. Syri IX. Parisiis 1907.
PL = Patrologiae cursus completus. Series latina, ed. J. P. MIGNE.
PLOOIJ, «Eine enkratitische Glosse» = D. PLOOIJ, «Eine enkratitische Glosse im Diatessaron», in: ZntW XXII(1923).
PO = Patrologia Orientalis, ed. R. GRAFFIN et F. NAU. Paris.
POGNON, *Inscriptions sémitiques de la Syrie* = H. POGNON, *Inscriptions sémitiques de la région de Mossoul*. Paris 1907.
POGNON, *Une version syriaque des aphorismes d'Hippocrate* = H. POGNON, *Une version syriaque des aphorismes d'Hippocrate*. Leipzig 1903.
PRENTICE, *Greek and Latin Inscriptions* = W. K. PRENTICE, *Greek and Latin Inscriptions*. New York 1908.
PREUSSER, *Nordmesopotamische Baudenkmäler* = C. PREUSSER, *Nordmesopotamische Baudenkmäler altchristlicher und islamischer Zeit*. Leipzig 1911.
PROCOPIOS, *De bello persico*, ed. HAURY = PROCOPIUS, *De bello persico*, ed. J. HAURY, in: *Procopius Caesarensis opera* I-III. Lipsiae 1905-13.
PSEUDO MACARIUS, *Epistula magna*, ed. JAEGER = *Macarii Epistula magna*, ed. JAEGER, in: *Two Rediscovered Works of Ancient Christian Literature: Gregory of Nyssa and Macarius*. Leiden 1954.
PSEUDO MACARIUS, *Die syrische Überlieferung der Schriften des Makarios*, ed. STROTHMANN = *Die syrische Überlieferung der Schriften des Makarios I: Syrischer Text*, ed. W. STROTMANN. Wiesbaden 1981.

PSEUDO-PHILOXENOS, *A Letter Sent to a Friend*, ed. OLINDER = *A Letter of Philoxemus of Mabbug Sent to a Friend*, ed. G. OLINDER, in: ActaUGot LVI. Göteborg 1950

PTuS = Patristische Texte und Studien. Berlin - New York.

PublPUArchE = Publications of the Princeton University Archeological Expeditions to Syria.

QDptAnt = *The Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities*. Jerusalem.

AL-QIFṬĪ, *Ta'rikh al-hukama'*, ed. LIPPERT = AL-QIFṬĪ, *Ta'rikh al-hukama'*, ed. I. LIPPERT. Leipzig 1903.

QUASTEN, *Patrology* I-II = J. QUASTEN, *Patrology* I-II. Westminster 1950-53.

QUISPEL, *Makarius, das Thomasevangelium und das Lied von der Perle* = G. QUISPEL, *Makarius, das Thomasevangelium und das Lied von der Perle*. Leiden 1967.

RAC = Realenzyklopädie für Antike und Christentum. Bonn.

RAeM = *Revue d'Ascétique et de Mystique*. Toulouse.

RAHLFS, «Zu den altabessinischen Königsinschriften» = A. RAHLFS, «Zu den altabessinischen Königsinschriften», in: OrChr(1916).

RAHNER, «Die geistliche Lehre des Evagrius» = K. RAHNER, «Die geistliche Lehre des Evagrius Pontikus», in: JAM VIII(1933).

RchSR = *Recherches de Science religieuse*. Paris.

REIsl = *Revue des Études Islamiques*.

Reliquiae juris eccl., ed. LAGARDE = *Reliquiae juris ecclesiastici antiquissimi syriace*, ed. A. P. DE LAGARDE. Lipsiae 1856.

RevB = *Revue bénédictine*, Maredsous.

RevEByz = *Revue des Études Byzantines*, Paris.

RHE = *Revue d'Histoire ecclésiastique*. Louvain.

RhMusPhil = Rheinisches Museum für Philologie.

RHR = *Revue d'histoire des religions*. Paris.

RivIdNum = *Rivista Italiana di numismatica e scienze affini*.

RivSBeN = *Rivista di Studi Bizantini e neoellenici*. Roma.

RRAL = Rendiconti della Reale Accademia nazionale dei Lincei. Roma.

RScE = *Revue des sciences ecclésiastiques*. Paris.

RStO = *Rivista degli Studi Orientali*.

ROTHENHÄUSLER, «Zur asketischen Lehrschrift des Diadochos» = M. ROTHENHÄUSLER, «Zur asketischen Lehrschrift des Diadochos von Photike», in: Herwegen Festschrift. 1938.

ROTHSTEIN, *Die Dynastie der Lakhmiden in al-Hira* = G. ROTHSTEIN, *Die Dynastie der Lakhmiden in al-Hira*. Berlin 1899.

RUFINUS, *Historia eccl.* I-III, ed. MOMMSEN = RUFINUS, *Historia ecclesiastica* I-III, ed. T. MOMMSEN, in: GChrS IX. Leipzig 1903-09.

AL-RUḲAIYAT, *Diwan*, ed. RHODOKANAKIS = AL-RUḲAIYAT, *Diwan*, ed. RHODOKANAKIS, in: SbAW 1902.

RÜCKER, «Aus dem mystischen Schrifttum nest. Mönche» = A. RÜCKER, «Aus dem mystischen Schrifttum nestorianischer Mönche» in: Morg XXVIII.

RÜCKER, «Die Zitate aus dem Matthäusevangelium im syrischen 'Buche der Stufen'» = A. RÜCKER, «Die Zitate aus dem Matthäusevangelium im syrischen 'Buche der Stufen'», in: ByzZ XX(1932).

RÜTHER, *Die sittliche Forderung der Apatheia* = T. RÜTHER, *Die sittliche Forderung der Apatheia in den beiden ersten christlichen Jahrhunderten und bei Klemens von Alexandrien*. Freiburg i.B. 1949.

RYCKMANS, «Le christianisme en Arabie du Sud préislamique» = J. RYCKMANS, «Le christianisme en Arabie du Sud préislamique», in: L'Oriente cristiano nella storia della civiltà. Roma 1964.

RYCKMANS, *La persécution des chrétiens himyarites* = J. RYCKMANS, *La persécution des chrétiens himyarites au sixième siècle*. Istanbul 1956.

RYSSEL, *Georgs des Araberbischofs Gedichte und Briefe* = V. RYSSEL, *Georgs des Araberbischofs Gedichte und Briefe*, Leipzig 1891.

SABÉOS, *Histoire d'Héraclius*, tr. MACLER = SABÉOS, *Histoire d'Héraclius*, tr. F. MACLER. Paris 1904.

ŠABUŠTI, *Das Klosterbuch*, übers. von SACHAU = *Vom Klosterbuch des Šabušti*, übers. von E. SACHAU, in: AbhPAW. Berlin 1919.

SACHAU, *Arabische Erzählungen aus der Zeit der Kaliphen* = E. SACHAU, *Arabische Erzählungen aus der Zeit der Kaliphen*. Münster 1920.

SACHAU, *Reise in Syrien und Mesopotamien* = E. SACHAU, *Reise in Syrien und Mesopotamien*. Leipzig 1883.

SACHAU, «Syrische Handschriften-Sammlungen» = E. SACHAU, «Über syrische Handschriften-Sammlungen im Orient», in: MittSOS III. Berlin - Stuttgart 1900.

SACHAU, *Verzeichnis der syr. Handschriften* I-II = E. SACHAU, *Verzeichnis der syrischen Handschriften* I-II, in: HVBB XII. Berlin 1899.

SACHAU, *Zur Ausbreitung des Christentums in Asien* = E. SACHAU, *Zur Ausbreitung des Christentums in Asien*, in: AbhPAW. Berlin 1919.

SaD = Studies and Documents. London.

SAHDŌNA, *Qui supersunt omnia*, ed. BEDJAN = *S. Martyrii qui est Sahdona qui supersunt omnia*, ed. P. BEDJAN. Parisiis - Lipsiae 1902.

SANDRECZKI, *Reise nach Mosul* = C. SANDRECZKI, *Reise nach Mosul und durch Kurdistan nach Urmia*.

SAUVAGET, «Les Ghassanides et Sergiopolis» = J. SAUVAGET, «Les Ghassanides et Sergiopolis», in: Byz XIV(1939).

Die Schatzhöhle, hrsgg. von BEZOLD = *Die Schatzhöhle*, hrsgg. von C. BEZOLD. Leipzig 1888.

SCHER, *Catalogue des manuscrits syriaques et arabes de Séert* = A. SCHER, *Catalogue des manuscrits syriaques et arabes conservés dans la bibliothèque épiscopale de Séert (Kurdistan)*. Mossoul 1905.

SCHER, «Étude supplémentaire sur les écrivains» = A. SCHER, «Étude supplémentaire sur les écrivains», in: ROC (1906).

SCHER, «Les manuscrits du Musée Borgia» = A. SCHER, «Notice sur les manuscrits syriaques du Musée Borgia aujourd'hui à la Bibliothèque Vaticane», in: JA X, XIII(1909).

SCHLUMBERGER, «Les fouilles de Qaṣr el-Ḥeir el Gharbi» = D. SCHLUMBERGER, «Les fouilles de Qaṣr el-Ḥeir el-Gharbi». in: Syria XX(1939).

SChr = Sources chrétiennes. Paris.

SCHWARTZ, *Zur Kirchenpolitik Justinians* = E. SCHWARTZ, *Zur Kirchenpolitik Justinians*. München 1940.

SCHWEN, *Afrahat* = P. SCHWEN, *Afrahat: seine Person und sein Verständnis des Christentums*, in: NSzGT II. Berlin 1907.
ŠEM'ŌN OF BĒT ARŠĀM, *La lettera*, ed. GUIDI = *La lettera di Simeone vescovo di Bēth Aršām sopra martiri Omerite*, ed. I. GUIDI, in: MRAccL III, VII(1881).
Sened, das ist Vertragsurkunde, Übers. von HAMMER = *Sened, das ist Vertragsurkunde*, Übers. von HAMMER, in: *Fundgruben des Orients*. Wien 1816.
SeT = Studi e Testi. Città del Vaticano.
SEVEROS, *The Sixth Book of the Select Letters* I-II, ed. BROOKS = *The Sixth Book of the Select Letters of Severus, Patriarch of Antioch in the Syriac Version of Athanasius of Nisibis* I-II, ed. E. W. BROOKS. London 1902-03.
SEVERUS BEN AL-MOQAFFA, *Historia patriarcharum Alexandrinorum* I-II, ed. C. F. SEYBOLD, in: CSCO Scr. Arab VIII-IX. Parisiis 1904-10.
SCHRÖTER, «Trostschreiben Jacob's von Sarug» = SCHRÖTER, «Trostschreiben Jacob's von Sarug an die Himyaritischen Christen», in: ZDMG XXXI (1877).
SHAHĪD, «The Book of the Himyarites» = I. SHAHĪD, «The Book of the Himyarites: Authorship», in: Mus LXXVI(1963).
SHAHĪD, *The Martyrs of Najran* = I. SHAHĪD, *The Martyrs of Najran: New Documents*. Bruxelles 1971.
SHERWOOD, «Le fonds patriarcal» = P. SHERWOOD, «Le fonds patriarcal de la Bibliothèque manuscrite de Charfet», in: OrSyr II(1957).
SHERWOOD, «Traité de Serge de Rešayna» = P. SHERWOOD, «Traité de Serge de Rešayna sur la vie spirituelle», in: OrSyr VI(1961).
SLIBA, *Le martyrologe*, éd. PEETERS = *Le martyrologe de Rabban Sliba*, éd. P. PEETERS, in: AnBoll XXVII(1908).
SMITH LEWIS, *Catalogue* = A. SMITH LEWIS, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the Convent of St. Catharine on Mount Sinai*, in: StSi I. London 1894.
SOCRATES, *Historia eccl.*, ed. MIGNE = SOCRATES, *Historia ecclesiastica*, ed. J. P. MIGNE, in: PG LXVII.
Sop'erk' haykakank' VI = *Sop'erk' haykakank'* VI. Venetik 1853.
SOPHRONIOS, *Oratio in Natalitia*, ed. USENER = *Oratio Sophronii in Christi Salvatoris nostri natalitia*, ed. H. USENER, in: RHMusPhil NF XLI. 1886.
Sources syriaques I-II, éd. MINGANA = *Sources syriaques* I-II, éd. A. MINGANA. Lipsiae 1908.
SOURDEL, «La politique religieuse du calife al-Ma'mun» = D. SOURDEL, «La politique religieuse du Calife 'Abbaside al-Ma'mun», in: REIsl XXX(1962).
SOZOMENOS, *Historia ecclesiastica*, ed. BIDEZ = SOZOMENUS, *Kirchengeschichte*, hrsgg. von J. BIDEZ, in: GChS L. Berlin 1960.
SPANNER - GUYER, *Rusafa* = H. SPANNER und S. GUYER, *Rusafa, die Wallfahrtsstadt des heiligen Sergius*. Berlin 1926.
SPULER, «Die westsyrische Kirche» = B. SPULER, «Die westsyrische (monophysitische/jakobitische) Kirche», in: HdO I, 8,2. Leiden 1961.
Srboyn Ep'remi matenagrowt'iwnk' = *Srboyn Ep'remi matenagrowt'iwnk'* II. Venetik 1836.
STAATS, *Gregor von Nyssa und die Messalianer* = R. STAATS, *Gregor von Nyssa und die Messalianer*, in: PTuS VIII. Berlin 1968.

StAns = Studia Anselmiana.
The Statutes of the School of Nisibis, ed. VÖÖBUS = *The Statutes of the School of Nisibis, the Syriac Text*, ed. A. VÖÖBUS, in: PapETSE XII. Stockholm 1962.
STEIN, *Histoire du Bas-Empire* = E. STEIN, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*. Paris - Bruxelles - Amsterdam 1949.
STEPHEN - BARAMKI, «A Nestorian Hermitage» = S. H. STEPHEN and D. C. BARAMKI, «A Nestorian Hermitage Between Jericho and the Jordan», in: QDptAnt IV(1935).
STIEHL, «Die Datierung des Königs Ēzānā» = R. STIEHL, «Die Datierung des Königs Ēzānā von Axum», in: Klio XXXIX(1961).
STRECK, «Tur 'Abdin» = M. STRECK, «Tur 'Abdin», in: EI IV.
STROTHMANN, *Die arabische Makariustradition* = W. STROTHMANN, *Die arabische Makariustradition: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Mönchtums*. Göttingen 1934.
STROTHMANN, «Makarios und die Makariosschriften» = W. STROTHMANN, «Makarios und die Makariosschriften in der syrischen Literatur», in: OrChr LXIV(1980).
Studia syriaca I-IV, ed. RAHMANI = *Studia syriaca* I-IV, ed. IGNATIUS EPHRAEM II RAHMANI. Sharfeh 1904-09.
AS-SUYUTI, *History of the Caliphs*, tr. JARRETT = AS-SUYUTI, *History of the Caliphs*, tr. H. S. JARRETT. Calcutta 1881.
SVNC = Scriptorum Veterum Nova Collectio I-X, ed. A. MAI. Romae 1825-38.
STUIBER, see ALTANER.
Le synaxaire arabe jacobite, éd. BASSET = *Le synaxaire arabe jacobite*, éd. R. BASSET, in: PO III, 9. Paris 1907.
Synaxaire éthiopien, ed. GUIDI - GRÉBAUT = *Synaxaire éthiopien*, ed. I. GUIDI et S. GRÉBAUT, in: PO I, 5; VII, 3; IX, 4; XV, 5. Paris 1907-27.
Synaxarium Alexandrinum I-II, ed. FORGET = *Synaxarium Alexandrinum*, ed. I. FORGET, in: CSCO Scr. Arab. III-V, XI. Parisiis 1905-09.
Synodicon orientale, éd. CHABOT = *Synodicon orientale ou recueil de synodes nestoriens*, éd. J. B. CHABOT. Paris 1902.
The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition I-IV, ed. VÖÖBUS = *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition* I-IV, ed. A. VÖÖBUS, in: CSCO Scr. Syri CLXI-CLXII, CLXII-CLXIV. Louvain 1975-76.
Syriac and Arabic Documents, ed. VÖÖBUS = *Syriac and Arabic Documents. Regarding Legislation Relative to Syrian Ascetism, Edited, Translated and Furnished with Literary Historical Data*, ed. A. VÖÖBUS, in: PapETSE XL. Stockholm 1960.
Syrische Rechtsbücher I-III, hrsgg. von SACHAU = *Syrische Rechtsbücher* I-III, hrsgg. von E. SACHAU. Berlin 1907-1914.
The Syro-Roman Lawbook, ed. VÖÖBUS = *The Syro Roman Lawbook. The Syriac Text of the Newly Discovered Manuscripts*, ed. A. VÖÖBUS, in: PapETSE XXXVI. Stockholm, 1982.
ṬABARĪ, *Ta'rīkh ar-rusul*, ed. DE GOEJE = ṬABARĪ, *Ta'rīkh ar-rusul wa 'l-mulūk*, ed. M. J. DE GOEJE. Leyden 1879-1901.
TaS = Texts and Studies. Cambridge.
THEODORETOS, *Haereticarum fabularum compendium*, ed. MIGNE = THEODOR-

ETUS, *Haereticarum fabularum compendium*, ed. J.P. MIGNE, in: PG LXXXIII.
THEODORETOS, *Historia eccl.*, ed. PARMENTIER = THEODORETUS, *Historia ecclesiastica*, ed. L. PARMENTIER, in: GChrS XIX. Berlin 1954.
THEODORETOS, *Historia religiosa*, ed. MIGNE = THEODORETUS, *Historia religiosa*, ed. J.P. MIGNE, in: PG LXXXII.
THEODOROS BAR KONAI, *Liber scholiorum* I-II, ed. SCHER = THEODOROS BAR KONAI, *Liber scholiorum* I-II, ed. A. SCHER, in: CSCO Scr. Syri II, LXVI. Parisiis 1912.
THEODOROS LECTOR, *Historia eccl.*, ed. MIGNE = THEODORUS LECTOR, *Historia ecclesiastica*, ed. J.P. MIGNE, in: PG LXXXVI.
THEOPHANES, *Chronographia* I-II, ed. DE BOOR = THEOPHANES, *Chronographia* I-I, ed. C. DE BOOR. Lipsiae 1883-85.
THEOPHYLACT SIMOCATTA, *Histor.*, ed. DE BOOR = THEOPHYLACT SIMOCATTA, *Historia*, ed. C. DE BOOR.
Thesaurus armeniacus I-II = *Nor bargirkh haykazean lezowi*, ed. G. AWETIKHEAN, H. SIWRLELEAN, J.B. AWGEREAN I-II. Venetik 1836-37.
Thesaurus Syriacus I-II, ed. SMITH = *Thesaurus Syriacus* I-II, ed. R. PAYNE SMITH, G.H. BERNSTEIN, G.W. LORSBACH *aliique*. Oxonii 1879-1901.
THOMAS OF MARGA, *The Book of Governors*, ed. BUDGE = THOMAS, *Bishop of Marga, The Book of Governors: the Historia Monastica*, ed. E.A.W. BUDGE. London 1893.
TIMOTHY THE PATRIARCH, *The Apology*, ed. MINGANA = *The Apology of Timothy the Patriarch Before the Caliph Mahdi*, ed. A. MINGANA, in: WSt II. Cambridge 1928.
TREU, «Zu einer Kiewer Handschrift der Opuscula» = K. TREU, «Zu einer Kiewer Handschrift der Opuscula des Macarius», in: TuU LXXVII(1961).
TRIMINGHAM, *Christianity Among the Arabs* = J.S. TRIMINGHAM, *Christianity Among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times*. London - New York 1979.
TRITTON, *The Caliphs and Their Non-Muslim Subjects* = A.S. TRITTON, *The Caliphs and Their Non-Muslim Subjects. A Critical Study of the Covenant of Umar*. London 1970.
TuPh = *Theologie und Philosophie*. Frankfurt.
TuU = Texte und Untersuchungen. Leipzig.
ULLENDORFF, *The Ethiopians* = E. ULLENDORFF, *The Ethiopians*. London 1960.
«Un colloque du patriarche Jean», éd. NAU = «Un colloque du patriarche Jean avec l'émir des Agaréens», éd. F. NAU, in: JA XI, V(1915).
«Une curieuse homélie grecque inédite», éd. AMAND-MOONS = «Une curieuse homélie grecque inédite sur la virginité adressée aux pères de famille», éd. D. AMAND et M.C. MOONS, in: RevB LXVIII(1953).
VAILHÉ, «Une 'Notitia episcopatum' d'Antioche» = S. VAILHÉ, «Une 'Notitia espiscopatum' d'Antioche du Xe siècle», in: EchO X(1907).
VAN LANTSCHOOT, *Inventaire* = A. VAN LANTSCHOOT, *Inventaire des manuscrits syriaques des fonds Vatican (490-631), Barberini oriental et Neofiti*, in: SeT CCXLIII. Città del Vaticano 1965.
VAN ROEY, «Les débuts de l'Église jacobite» = A. VAN ROEY, «Les débuts de l'Église jacobite», in: A. GRILLMEYER und H. BACHT, *Das Konzil von Chalcedon II*. Würzburg 1953.

VAN ROMPAY, «The Martyrs of Najran» = L. VAN ROMPAY, «The Martyrs of Najran. Some Remarks on the Nature of the Sources», in: Studia Paulo Naster oblata, in: OrLAnal XIII. Leuven 1982.
VASILIEV, *Justin the First* = A.A. VASILIEV, *Justin the First*. Cambridge, Mass. 1950.
VdOHD = Verzeichnis der orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland. Wiesbaden.
VerhkAvW = Verhandelingen der kon. Akademie van Wetenschappen. Amsterdam.
«La vie de Benjamin», éd. SCHEIL = «La vie de Mar Benjamin, texte syriaque, éd. V. SCHEIL, in: ZAssyr XII(1897).
Vie d'al-Hadjdjad ibn Yousof, éd. PÉRIER = *Vie d'al-Hadjdjad ibn Yousof*, éd. A.J. PÉRIER. Paris 1904.
«Vie du moine Rabban Youssef», tr. CHABOT = «Vie du moine Rabban Yousef», tr. J.B. CHABOT, in: ROC (1898).
VigChr = *Vigiliae Christianae*. Amsterdam.
VILLECOURT, «La date et l'origine des 'Homélies spirituelles'» = L. VILLECOURT, «La date et l'origine des 'Homélies spirituelles' attribuées à Macaire», in: CRAIeBL. Paris 1920.
Vita Eustathii, ed. TURAIEV = *Vita Eustathii*, ed. B. TURAIEV, in: MonAethHag. Petropoli 1905.
Vitae virorum apud monoph. celeberrimorum, ed. BROOKS = *Vitae virorum apud monophysitas celeberrimorum*, ed. E.W. BROOK, in: CSCO Scr. Syri VII. Pariis 1907.
VÖLKER, *Gregor von Nyssa als Mystiker* = W. VÖLKER, *Gregor von Nyssa als Mystiker*. Wiesbaden 1955.
VÖLKER, *Das Vollkommenheitsideal des Origenes* = W. VÖLKER, *Das Vollkommenheitsideal des Origenes*. Tübingen 1931.
VÖÖBUS, «Die Anweisungen von Aphrahaṭ» = A. VÖÖBUS, «Die Anweisungen von Aphrahaṭ», in: JbAuC.
VÖÖBUS, «Aphrahaṭ» = A. VÖÖBUS, «Aphrahaṭ», in: RAuC, Ergänzungsband I. Bonn 1981.
VÖÖBUS, «Barṣauma» = A. VÖÖBUS, «Barṣauma, Bishop of Nisibis», in: EncIran.
VÖÖBUS, «Die Biographie des Rabbūlā und das Ps. Amphilochianische Panegyrikus» = A. VÖÖBUS, «Das literarische Verhältnis zwischen der Biographie des Rabbūlā und dem Pseudo-Amphilochianischen Panegyrikus über Basilius», in: OrChr XLIV(1960).
VÖÖBUS, «La biographie de Philoxène» = A. VÖÖBUS, «La biographie de Philoxène. Tradition des manuscrits», in: AB XCIII(1975).
VÖÖBUS, «Boskoi» = A. VÖÖBUS, «Boskoi», in: LexMit.
VÖÖBUS, *Celibacy, A Requirement for Admission to Baptism* = A. VÖÖBUS, *Celibacy, A Requirement for Admission to Baptism in the Early Syrian Church*, in: PapETSE I. Stockholm 1951.
VÖÖBUS, «Découverte de la biographie de Théodote d'Amid» = A. VÖÖBUS,

«Découverte de la biographie de Théodote d'Amid par Šemon de Samosata», in: Mus LXXXIX(1976).
VÖÖBUS, «Découverte d'une lettre de Sévère d'Antioche» = A. VÖÖBUS, «Découverte d'une lettre de Sévère d'Antioche», in: RevEByz XXXI.
VÖÖBUS, «Découverte d'un *mēmrā* de Gīwargī sur Sévère d'Antioche» = A. VÖÖBUS, «Découverte d'un *mēmrā* de Gīwargī, évêque des Arabes, sur Sévère d'Antioche», in: Mus LXXXIV(1971).
VÖÖBUS, *The Didascalia Apostolorum in Syriac*, see *The Didascalia Apostolorum in Syriac.*
VÖÖBUS, «Discovery of the Biography of Severos of Antioch by Qyriaqos» = A. VÖÖBUS, «Discovery of the Biography of Severos of Antioch by Qyriaqos of Tagrit», in: RivSBeN XXIII(1976).
VÖÖBUS, *Discovery of the Exegetical Works of Mōšē bar Kēphā* = A. VÖÖBUS, *Discovery of the Exegetical Works of Mōšē bar Kēphā*, in: PapETSE XXV. Stockholm 1973.
VÖÖBUS, «Discovery of the New Exegetical Manuscripts of Mōšē bar Kēphā» = A. VÖÖBUS, «Discovery of New Exegetical Manuscripts of Mōšē bar Kēphā on the Apostolos», in: AbrNahr VIII.
VÖÖBUS, «Discovery of an Unknown Syrian Author: Theōdōṭē of Amid» = A. VÖÖBUS, «Discovery of an Unknown Syrian Author: Theōdōṭē of Amid», in: Festschrift J. BOWMAN.
VÖÖBUS, «Discovery of New Important *mēmrē* of Gīwargī» = A. VÖÖBUS, «Discovery of New Important *mēmrē* of Gīwargī the Bishop of the Arabs», in: JSS XVIII(1973).
VÖÖBUS, «Discovery of New Manuscript Sources for the Biography of Simon the Stylite» = A. VÖÖBUS, «Discovery of New Manuscript Sources for the Biography of Simon the Stylite», in: *Feestbundel Professor A. Van Roey*. Leuven 1983.
VÖÖBUS, *Early Version of the NT* = A. VÖÖBUS, *Early Versions of the New Testament. Manuscript Studies*, in: PapETSE VI. Stockholm 1954.
VÖÖBUS, «Ein neuer Text von Ephraem über das Mönchtum» = A. VÖÖBUS, «Ein neuer Text von Ephraem über das Mönchtum», in: OrChr XLII(1958).
VÖÖBUS, «Eine neue Schrift von Isḥāq von Ninive» = A. VÖÖBUS, «Eine neue Schrift von Isḥāq von Ninive», in: OstS XXI(1972).
VÖÖBUS, «Eine unbekannte Biographie des Ja'qōb von Serūg» = A. VÖÖBUS, «Eine unbekannte Biographie des Ja'qōb von Serūg», in: Zkg LXXXV (1974).
VÖÖBUS, «Eine wichtige Urkunde über die Geschichte des Ḥanānjā-Klosters» = A. VÖÖBUS, «Eine wichtige Urkunde über die Geschichte des Mār Ḥanānjā-Klosters», in: OrChr LIII(1969).
VÖÖBUS, *Einiges über die karitative Tätigkeit des syrischen Mönchtums* = A. VÖÖBUS, *Einiges über die karitative Tätigkeit des syrischen Mönchtums. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Liebestätigkeit im Orient*, in: CBU LI. Pinneberg 1947.
VÖÖBUS, «Entdeckung neuer Handschriften des anti-julianischen Pastoralschreibens» = A. VÖÖBUS, «Entdeckung neuer Handschriften des anti-julianischen Pastoralschreibens», in: OrChr LXVI(1982).

VÖÖBUS, «Entdeckung des Panegyrikus über Jōḥannān von Mardē» = A. VÖÖBUS, «Entdeckung des Paneyrikus über Jōḥannān von Mardē von dem Patriarchen Mikā'ēl, in: OrChr LVI(1971).
VÖÖBUS, «Entdeckung der neuen handschriftlichen Quellen für die Biographie des Ahudemmeh» = A. VÖÖBUS, «Entdeckung der neuen handschriftlichen Quellen für die Biographie des Ahudemmeh», in: OrChr LXV(1981).
VÖÖBUS, «Die Entdeckung von zwei Biographien des Severos von Antiochien» = A. VÖÖBUS, «Die Entdeckung von zwei Biographien des Severus von Antiochien», in: ByzZ LXVIII(1975).
VÖÖBUS, «Die Entdeckung wichtiger Urkunden für die syrische Mystik: Jōḥannān von Daljātā» = A. VÖÖBUS, «Die Entdeckung wichtiger Urkunden für die syrische Mystik: Jōḥannān von Daljātā», in: ZDMG CXXV(1975).
VÖÖBUS, *Handschriftliche Überlieferung der Mēmrē-Dichtung des Ja'qōb von Serūg* I-IV = A. VÖÖBUS, *Handschriftliche Überlieferung der Mēmrē-Dichtung des Ja'qōb von Serūg* I-IV, in: CSCO Subs XXXIX-XL; LX-LXI. Louvain 1973-80.
VÖÖBUS, *History of Asceticism* I-II = A. VÖÖBUS, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient: A Contribution to the History of Culture in the Near East* I-II, in: CSCO Subs XIV, XVII. Louvain 1958-60.
VÖÖBUS, *History of the Gospel Text in Syriac* I-II = A. VÖÖBUS, *Studies in the History of the Gospel Text in Syriac* I-II, in: CSCO Subs III, LXXIV. Louvain 1951-87.
VÖÖBUS, *History of the School of Nisibis* = A. VÖÖBUS, *History of the School of Nisibis*, in: CSCO Subs XXVI. Louvain 1965.
VÖÖBUS, *The Importance of the Legacy of Pseudo-Macarius* = A. VÖÖBUS, *On the Historical Importance of the Legacy of Pseudo-Macarius: New Observations About its Syriac Provenance*, in: PapETSE XXIII. Stockholm 1972.
VÖÖBUS, «Important Manuscript Discoveries on Iwannīs of Dārā» = A. VÖÖBUS, «Important Manuscript Discoveries on Iwannīs of Dārā and His Literary Heritage», in: JAOS XCVI(1976).
VÖÖBUS, *A Letter of Ephrem to the Mountaineers* = A. VÖÖBUS, *A Letter of Ephrem to the Mountaineers*, in: CBU XXV. Pinneberg 1947.
VÖÖBUS, «Liber graduum: Some Aspects of its Significance = A. VÖÖBUS, «Liber graduum: Some Aspects of its Significance for the History of Early Syrian Asceticism», in: Charisteria Ioanni Kopp octogenario oblata, PapETSE VII. Stockholm 1954.
VÖÖBUS, *Literary-Critical and Historical Studies* = A. VÖÖBUS, *Literary-Critical and Historical Studies in Ephrem the Syrian*, in: PapETSE X. Stockholm 1958.
VÖÖBUS, *Les messaliens et les réformes de Barṣauma* = A. VÖÖBUS, *Les messaliens et les réformes de Barṣauma de Nisibe dans l'Église perse*, in: CBU XXXIV. Pinneberg 1947.
VÖÖBUS, «Methodologisches zum Studium der Anweisungen Aphrahats» = A. VÖÖBUS, «Methodologisches zum Studium der Anweisungen Aphrahats», in: OrChr XLVI(1962).
VÖÖBUS, «Neue Entdeckungen für die Biographie des Severos von Antiochien»

= A. VÖÖBUS, «Neue Entdeckungen für die Biographie des Severos von Antiochien von Jōḥannān von Bēt Aphtūnājā», in: OstS XXIV(1975).
VÖÖBUS, Neue handschriftliche Funde über die Biographie des Jaʿqōb Būrdʿānā» = A. VÖÖBUS, «Neue handschriftliche Funde über die Biographie des Jaʿqōb Būrdʿānā», in: OstSt XXII(1973).
VÖÖBUS, «Neue Urkunden zur 'Notitia Antiochena'» = A. VÖÖBUS, «Neue Urkunden zur 'Notitia Antiochena'», in: OCP LI(1985).
VÖÖBUS, «Neues Licht über die Restaurationswerk des Jōḥannān von Mardē» = A. VÖÖBUS, Neues Licht über die Restaurationswerk des Jōḥannān von Mardē», in: OrChr XLVII(1963).
VÖÖBUS, «Ein Panegyrikus über Severos von Antiochien» = A. VÖÖBUS, «Ein Panegyrikus über Severos von Antiochien von Qyriaqos», in: JbLitW XLII.
VÖÖBUS, «On the Pathways of the Syrian Orient» = A. VÖÖBUS, «On the Pathways of the Syrian Orient in Pursuit of Manuscript Treasures», in: The Vööbus Collection.
VÖÖBUS, «New Manuscript Sources for the Book of Hierotheos», in: RSO XLIX(1975).
VÖÖBUS, «Selbstanklages Ephräms in griechischer Überlieferung» = A. VÖÖBUS, «Selbstanklages Ephräms des Syrers in griechischer Überlieferung: Beobachtungen über ihre Herkunft», in: OrChr XLI(1957).
VÖÖBUS, «Solution du problème de l'auteur de la lettre, adressée au Gamallīnos» = A. VÖÖBUS, «Solution du problème de l'auteur de la lettre adressée au Gamallīnos».
VÖÖBUS, *Die Spuren eines älteren äthiopischen Evangelientextes* = A. VÖÖBUS, *Die Spuren eines älteren äthiopischen Evangelientextes im Lichte literarischen Monumente*, in: PapETSE II. Stockholm 1951.
VÖÖBUS, *Syriac Manuscripts* = A. VÖÖBUS, *Syriac Manuscripts from the Treasure House of the Monastery of Nār Ḥanānyā or Deir Zaʿfarān* (in preparation).
VÖÖBUS, «Syrische Herkunft der Ps-Basilianischen Homilie» = A. VÖÖBUS, «Syrische Herkunft der Pseudo-Basilianischen Homilie über die Jungfräulichkeit», in: OrChr XL(1956).
VÖÖBUS, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen* I,1,A and I,1,B = A. VÖÖBUS, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen: Ein Beitrag zur Quellenkunde I: Westsyrische Originalurkunden* I,1,A - I,1,B, in: CSCO Subs XXXV, XXXVIII. Louvain 1970.
VÖÖBUS, «Syrische Verordnungen für die Novizen» = A. VÖÖBUS, «Syrische Verordnungen für die Novizen und ihre handschriftliche Überlieferung» in: OrChr LIV(1970).
VÖÖBUS, *Untersuchungen über die Authentizität* = A. VÖÖBUS, *Untersuchungen über die Authentizität einiger asketischer Texte, überliefert unter dem Namen Ephraem Syrus*, in: CBU LVII. Pinneberg 1947.
VÖÖBUS, *La vie d'Alexandre en grec* = A. VÖÖBUS, *La vie d'Alexandre en grec — un témoin d'une biographie inconnue de Rabboula écrite en syriaque*, in: CBU LXII. Pinneberg 1948.
VÖÖBUS, «Ein Zyklus von Verordnungen für die Ausbildung der Novizen» = «Ein Zyklus von Verordnungen für die Ausbildung der Novizen im syrischen Mönchtum», hrsgg. von A. VÖÖBUS, in: OrChr LIX(1975).

The Vööbus Collection = *The Professor Arthur Vööbus Collection of Syriac Manuscripts on Film and the Institute of Syriac Manuscript Studies*. Chicago 1982.
VOSTÉ, Catalogue = J. VOSTÉ, *Catalogue de la Bibliothèque syro-chaldéenne du couvent de Notre-Dame des Semences près d'Alqoš (Iraq)*. Rome - Paris 1929.
WADDINGTON, *Inscriptions grecques et latines* = W.H. WADDINGTON, *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie*. Paris 1870.
WAKIDI, *Kitab al-Maghari*, tr. WELLHAUSEN = WAKIDI, *Kitab al-Maghari*, tr. J. WELLHAUSEN. Berlin 1882.
WATT, «Philoxenus and the Old Syriac Version of Evagrius' Centuries» = J.W. WATT, «Philoxenus and the Old Syriac Version of Evagrius' Centuries», in: OrChr LXIV(1980).
WELLHAUSEN, *Reste arabischen Heidentums* = J. WELLHAUSEN, *Reste arabischen Heidentums*. Berlin 1897.
WENSINCK, *Mystic Treatises by Isaac of Nineveh* = A.J. WENSINCK, *Mystic Treatises by Isaac of Nineveh*, in: VerhkAW NR XXIII, 1. Amsterdam 1923.
WENSINCK, *New Data Concerning Syriac Mystic Literature* = A.J. WENSINCK, *New Data Concerning Syriac Mystic Literature*, in: MedkAvW LV. Amsterdam 1923.
WILMART, «L'origine véritable des 'homélies pneumatiques'» = A. WILMART, «L'origine véritable des 'homélies pneumatiques'», in: RAeM I(1920).
WRIGHT, *Catalogue* I-III = W. WRIGHT, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum Acquired Since the Year 1838* I-III. London 1870-72.
WRIGHT, *A Short History of Syriac Literature* = W. WRIGHT, *A Short History of Syriac Literature*. London 1894.
WRIGHT - COOK, *Catalogue* I-II = W. WRIGHT and S.A. COOK, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in Cambridge* I-II. Cambridge 1901.
WSt = Woodbrooke Studies. Cambridge.
YAʿQOUB, *Le livre de l'impôt foncier*, tr. FAGNAN = ABOU YOUSOF YAʿQOUB, *Le livre de l'impôt foncier*, tr. F. FAGNAN, in: BiblAeH I. Paris 1921.
YAʿQŪBĪ, *Historiae* I-II, ed. HOUTSMA = YAʿQŪBĪ, *Historiae* I-II, ed. T. HOUTSMA. Paris 1883.
YAʿQŪBĪ, *Les pays*, tr. WIET = YAʿQŪBĪ, *Les pays*, tr. WIET, Le Caire 1937.
YĀQŪT, *Muʿjam al-buldān* I-VI, ed. WÜSTENFELD = YĀQŪT, *Muʿjam al-buldān* I-VI, ed. F. WÜSTENFELD. Leipzig 1866-73.
YĀSĪN AL-ʿOMARĪ, *Meeniat al-Udabā* = YĀSĪN AL-ʿOMARĪ, *Meeniat al-Udabā'*. Mosul 1955.
YOVHAN MANDAKOWNI, *Ǧarkʿ* = YOVHAN MANDAKOWNI, *Ǧarkʿ*. Venetik 1860.
ZACHARIAS RHETOR, *Historia eccl.*, ed. BROOKS = *Historia ecclesiastica Zachariae Rhetori vulgo adscripta* I-II, ed. E.W. BROOKS, in: CSCO Scr. Syri III, 5-6. Lovanii 1919-21.
ZDMG = *Zeitschrift für die Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft*.
ZfAssyr = *Zeitschrift für Assyrologie*.
ZntW = *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*.
ZOTENBERG, *Catalogue* = H. ZOTENBERG, *Catalogue des manuscrits syriaques et sabéens (mandaïtes) de la Bibliothèque Nationale*. Paris 1874.

I. THE EARLIEST SOURCES OF STIMULI FOR ASCETICISM

1. The Ketābā de-masqātā

a. *The Source*

This very extensive document in the ancient Syriac literature was made available in print as long ago as 1926[1], however, it did not find or receive the attention which it really deserved for a long time, and when it did, then only in connection with the Messalians (Euchites). But its real significance and contribution to church historical study was completely overlooked. This certainly lies elsewhere.

When the learned editor, Prof. Kmosko, was preparing this text[2] for publication, other exciting discoveries were moving the scholarly world. Villecourt found that certain passages in the «spiritual homilies» preserved under the name of Macarios coincided with the Messalian phrases quoted by Timotheos of Constantinople and John of Damascus. On the basis of these observations he came to the conclusion that all of the material ascribed to Macarios is of Messalian origin. These and subsequent studies[3] provided the incentive for a new approach and created an expectation that the long lost Asceticon of the Messalians, known by name through the acts of the Ephesian Synod, could be recovered.

It certainly is not without significance that Kmosko's preparation for his edition fell within this period of excitement. These new winds, together with all that was in the air, could hardly have left a scholar working on this unknown ascetical work from an anonymous author untouched. Nor is it a cause for wonder that Kmosko, too, began to see positive connections between the *Ketābā de-masqātā* or the *Liber graduum* and the Messalian movement. He felt that the milieu suggested by this document pointed to an early stage in the development of this movement[4].

[1] *Liber gradum*, ed. Kmosko.

[2] «La date et l'origine des 'Homélies spirituelles'», p. 250ff.

[3] L'origine véritable des 'Homélies pneumatiques'», p. 361ff.; «La fausse lettre latine de Macaire», p. 411ff.

[4] «Hinc non est mirum in L.G. quoque inveniri semina eiusdem doctrinae perversae ex qua antinomismus periculosus Messalianorum germinavit», Praefatio, p. c.

All this is quite understandable. But it is surprising that in subsequent research his thesis was taken for granted and that this document was given attention only from this point of view. Rücker accepted Kmosko's views[5]. So, too, Kemmer[6], Rothenhäusler[7] and even Lietzmann all too quickly gave his imprimatur to such an assertion[8]. In the year 1935 Hausherr wrote an article on the date of the composition of this document in which he strengthened Kmosko's view by an apodictic statement: «Messalianismi aliquam speciem in Libro graduum exiberi nemini dubium esse poterit»[9]. And this has been restated by the same scholar[10]. In a study published in 1938 he says: «L'encratisme du *Liber graduum* est messalien aussi bien que l'immoralisme que signale saint Jean Damascène et Théodoret»[11]. These statements certainly are brave, but such assertions should have invited interrogation. But Kmosko's theory did not receive the critical re-examination it deserved. Indeed, it is strange that it was able to mesmerize scholars for such a long time. Belatedly even Gribomont has joined this company[12].

But then the interrogation came. In a closer study I have submitted all this free speculation to a scrutiny[13]. Its outcome was twofold. First of all, these assertions do not bear serious critical examination for there is nothing in the document of the doctrines ascribed to the Messalian movement. The facts do not need to be repeated here. The work itself is of another order, one of the oldest monuments of the Syriac literature, and it should be restored to the place of honor which belongs to it[14].

That study, moreover, showed how a prevailing attitude prevented students from engaging in the real scholarly task, that of studying the source itself, of exploring the riches which this monumental work presents for church historical research and, in particular, the history of the earliest Syrian spirituality. This clearly ought to have weighed much more heavily in the scales than listening to the heresiologues[15].

[5] «Die Zitate aus dem Matthäusevangelium im syrischen 'Buche der Stufen'», p. 342.
[6] *Charisma maximum*, p. 32ff.
[7] «Zur asketischen Lehrschrift des Diadochos», p. 536ff.
[8] *Geschichte der alten Kirche* IV, p. 211ff.
[9] «Quanam aetate prodierit 'Liber graduum'», p. 497.
[10] «L'erreur fondamentale et la logique du Messalianisme», p. 497.
[11] «Le Messalianisme», p. 6.
[12] «Les Homélies ascétiques de Philoxène», p. 419ff.
[13] «Liber graduum, Some Aspects of Its Significance for the History of Early Syrian Asceticism», p. 108ff.
[14] It is surprising that this work does not appear in the handbook of patrology, ALTANER-STUIBER, *Patrologie*.
[15] My study was published 34 years ago; 13 years later Guillaumont has devoted several years to the study of this source and has arrived at an analogous conclusion; see his «Situation et signification du *Liber graduum*». See also matter of fact comments in BÄSS, «Der Liber graduum ein Messalianisches Buch?», p. 368ff.

To be sure, the document radiates thoughts and ideas which are strange to the student who reads it with eyes accustomed to standards in western Christianity. However, in studying these texts one has not to forget that we stand in the midst of the milieu of the Syrian Orient, for the evaluation of which the standards of western thought simply do not apply. Quite apart from that, it is patent that the peculiar features in the document represent views and practices which were at home in the lands of the Tigris and Euphrates, perspectives which give us opportunities to be studied and challenges to be met. Particularly since we are introduced to the earliest period of Syrian spirituality and asceticism, and also because such an undertaking means an advance on the frontiers of research.

The *Ketābā de-masqātā*, the Book of Degrees, is a very extensive work, one comprised of thirty *mēmrē*. It has been preserved anonimously. The ancient editor of the text from whom the introduction has survived, did not know the name of the author of this work and therefore simply assumed that the author was «one of the last disciples of the apostles»[16].

b. *Its Physiognomy*

Now it is time to take a preliminary look at the physiognomy of this source.

One of the most surprising features in the thought of the *Ketābā demasqātā* is the distinction made between Christians; they are into two categories: the righteous ones and the perfect ones. A chapter has been devoted to the distinction of these two categories[1]. The *kīnē*[2] «righteous ones» are those who have not overcome their love for visible things in the world. They remain therefore in the ordinary life which is ordered by God, but — it should be remembered — under the proviso that Adam had disobeyed the Creator's will. As a result, God gave them labor and worry and marriage[3]. For those Christians, there must be an awareness

[16] *Liber graduum*, col. 1.
[1] *Mēmrā* XIV: «On the just and the perfect ones», col. 323.
[2] ܟܐܢܐ or also ܩܕܝܫܐ *qadīšē*, «the holy ones».
[3] *Mēmrā* XX, col. 541.

of the necessity for a sober balance in life. For this purpose, besides New Testament ethical admonitions, the document cites certain apocryphal sources quoted as Scripture. One such runs as follows: «Take heed that you do not possess in iniquity; and do not build in sin as if you were building for eternity or for an eternity you would possess, nor in prodigality to use the world — for the face of this world passes away»[4].

Above the righteous one stands the *īhīdāyā*[5] «solitary». This category represents the perfect ones — *gemīrē*[6], constituting the spiritual elite. These are those who have made a covenant[7] with the Lord and have become the «sons of the covenant»[8]. This fundamental concept of the distinction between the just and the perfect underlies the entire work. Indeed, the separation into two categories is so structural that it penetrates all areas: exegesis, Christian life, the concept of the church, sacraments, charismatic gifts, and future things. This phenomenon is so important that before proceeding to the thoughtworld of our source, it needs further elucidation.

How are we to explain this peculiar thought? To be sure, today one might gaze upon it as a curiosity. At first sight it looks as if the key to its understanding has been lost. It has even been suggested that this was due to a Manichaean influence[9]. However, that calls for caution. We know that Manichaeism itself has borrowed substantial elements from Syrian traditions and absorbed them during the period of its consolidation. In addition, the separation of believers into two categories in that system is of basal importance. To infer that Manichaean influence is visible in Syriac Christianity in this connection, rather than the other way around, is hazardous. Little is to be gained in chasing this circle.

The whole question takes on a new complexion when the effort is made to take its peculiar origin and traditions in the process of developing its own form of Christianity into account.

First of all, there is a historical fact which assists us in our inquiry. When we consult the documents of ancient Christianity in Syria, Mesopotamia and Persia, we learn that the earliest stage in the pro-

[4] *Mēmrā* X, col. 260.

[5] ܝܚܝܕܝܐ.

[6] ܓܡܝܪ̈ܐ.

[7] ܩܝܡܐ, *qeyāmā*.

[8] ܒܢ̈ܝ ܩܝܡܐ.

[9] HAUSHERR, «L'erreur fondamentale», p. 333.

clamation of the Christian message in the Syrian Orient was determined by spirits of quite different opinion concerning the nature of the gospel than that of the leading spirits who framed Christianity in the west. Under the influence of these powerful men a peculiar type of Christianity came into being. The message which was transplanted into the lands of the Tigris and Euphrates, and there found very receptive ground, was rigorously ascetic, and this mode of Christianity as it matured stimulated the growth of ascetically oriented movements. Among the powerful men who fostered this growth were Marcion, Tatian, Valentinus and several kinds of Encratites. The evidence for the expansion of these movements and of the significance of their role, has been submitted elsewhere[10] and does not need to be reproduced here.

Just as important is the fact that, despite the multi-hued, variegated context and the variety of stimuli and movements which occupied the stage of the Syrian Orient, Christianity in the east did retain a fairly consistent character — it was structurally more or less homogenous insofar as the ascetic element and its application was concerned. These communities of the Near East, despite differences in religious and theological concepts and systems of thought, in the form of Scripture and in the variety of their practices, were in full agreement on the basic substructure, namely that the very essence of Christian life was ascetic. This was a fundamental factor which shaped the earliest Christian communities in these areas. The real congregation embodied «the spiritual mode of life» as an instrument which tended towards a negation of this world and towards the accomplishment of the cosmic upheaval. But for those who did not possess the courage to take on the whole burden of requirements, yet were interested in the Christian message, such persons were considered penitents, catechumens or as Christians of a subordinate order. Throughout the Syrian orbit, wherever Christianity took root, communities arose which rested on the principle of two distinct categories of Christians.

It is not necessary to bring evidence forward for the Church of Marcion[11], Tatian[12] or Valentinus[13] because this would be a repetition

[10] See the chapter «The Character of the Christian Message Which Molded Early Syrian Christianity» in my *Celibacy, a Requirement for Admission to Baptism in the Early Syrian Church*, p. 11-20. See also my *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient* I, p. 62ff.

[11] HARNACK, *Marcion*.

[12] VÖÖBUS, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient* I, p. 31ff.

[13] MÜLLER, *Beiträge zum Verständnis der valentinianischen Gnosis*, p. 237f.

of things well known. But it must be mentioned that the same principle operated in other ancient Syrian groups whose theological orientations were different. Thus the environment in which the Pseudo-Clementine letters *De virginitate* originated shows a milieu thoroughly different in theological position, but completely identical with the above-mentioned groups at the level of this fundamental principle. This is evident in the Syriac[14], as well as in the more recently found Coptic[15], version. The community of Christians is called the «city of God», the «house» and the «temple» in which God lives[16], and consists of the ascetic elite, a class of spiritual athletes who on earth traversed the cities and villages carrying out their evangelistic enterprise. But all others are only «companions» and «neighbors»[17].

Further light comes from a quite unexpected quarter. A very valuable piece of an historically important ancient Syrian baptismal liturgy, preserved in the seventh homily of ʿAphrahaṭ, the Persian sage, needs to be cited. Here texts confront us which have puzzled scholars since their publication. As I have already shown elsewhere[18], they go back to a very primitive Mesopotamian liturgy of baptism. These text portions uncover the same ancient principle: the congregation consists of ascetics who alone receive baptism and alone partake of the Eucharist. Alongside of these Christians there are the penitents or adherents who remain outside, who marry, build homes and plant vineyards but do not belong to the body of the church and therefore cannot partake of the sacramental life[19].

As a liturgical source, such a document in particular is to be welcomed for our inquiry. It allows us to look into the heart of primitive

[14] *Epistolae binae de virginitate*, ed. BEELEN.

[15] ϥϯ ⲅⲁⲣ ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲥⲓⲟⲩⲣ ⲙⲛⲙⲡⲁⲣⲑⲉⲛⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲙⲁ ⲉϥⲥⲟⲧⲡ ϩⲙ̄ⲛⲉϥⲏⲉⲓ ⲉϣⲏⲣⲉ ϩⲓϣⲉⲉⲣⲉ· ⲉⲩⲥⲟⲧⲡ ⲡⲁⲣⲁⲛⲉⲛⲧⲁⲩϣⲱⲡⲉ ϩⲙ̄ⲡⲅⲁⲙⲟⲥ ⲉⲧⲧⲁⲉⲓⲏⲩ ⲙⲛ̄ⲡⲙⲁ ⲛⲛⲕⲟⲧⲕ ⲉⲧⲧⲃⲃⲏⲩ. ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲛⲁϯ ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲛⲧⲁⲩⲁⲁⲩ ⲛ̄ⲥⲓⲟⲩⲣ ⲙ̄ⲙⲓⲛ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲟⲩ ⲙⲛⲙⲡⲁⲣⲑⲉⲛⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲣⲟ̄ ⲛ̄ⲁⲧⲧⲱⲗⲙ̄ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲛⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ. ϩⲓⲧⲛ̄ⲧⲉϊⲛⲟϭ ⲛ̄ϩⲟⲙⲟⲗⲟⲅⲓⲁ, «For he gives in his home a place more excellent than sons and daughters to eunuchs and virgins; for they are more excellent than those who dwell in honorable marriage and in a pure bed, God will give an incorruptible kingdom of angels to whose who have made themselves eunuchs, and to virgins, because of this great witness», «Le 'De virginitate' de S. Clément ou de S. Athanase?», éd., LEFORT, p. 256.

[16] *De virginitate* I, 9, ed. BEELEN, p. 40.

[17] ܩܪ̈ܝܒܝܗܘܢ, *ibid.*, p. 2, 4.

[18] *Celibacy, a Requirement for Admission to Baptism*, p. 55ff.

[19] *Demonstratio*, ed. PARISOT, col. 341, 344f.

Christianity, at vital moments, moments intended to test the soul of the candidate's desire for baptism and to see whether his determination to enter upon Christian life was made of steel or lesser stuff. The textual portions outline this life of the Christian ascetic with unmistakable clarity when they say: «The contest (applies only) to the solitary ones, because their faces are set for that which is before them, and they do not remember anything that lies behind them»[20]. It is spoken of again in another admonition as trial and testing: «The struggle (applies only) to him who renounces himself, because he does not remember anything which is behind him and does not retreat to it[21]. It is made clear that this «struggle» involves life without marriage and without possessions; it is a life in privation and asceticism. This, then, is the «contest»[22]. The term appears repeatedly; it became a key word in describing the true Christian life, together with the word «struggle.»

Other sources suggest the same underlying concept and they reach us via the stream of hagiographical traditions. It is also very possible that such archaic traditions as the concept of baptism in the specific sense of initiation into the ascetic life have been embedded in younger traditions[23].

This review of the sources makes it manifest how deeply the principle of the two categories of Christians has penetrated Christian thought and life in the most ancient Syrian communities, whether heterodox or orthodox. Here we have before us a concept which, historically speaking, has played an utterly significant role. Everything that we are permitted to see in these documents leads to this conclusion. It is difficult to resist the feeling that this was a phenomenon at once too powerful and too vital to be eradicated by reform attempts intended to make the sacramental means of grace available to all Christians, in conformity with the practice in the west. Indeed, this conclusion is strengthened by the observation that this archaic principle actually continued to live in many a circle,

[20] *Ibid.*, col. 341.

[21] *Ibid.*, col. 345.

[22] ܐܓܘܢܐ.

[23] There is a very significant reflection of a very ancient tradition in the story of Mār Sābā who says to his mother after his conversion and baptism: ܩܒܠܝ ܪܘܫܡܐ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ ܐܝܟܘܬܝ. ܘܫܒܘܩܝ ܠܥܠܡܐ ܗܢܐ ܘܠܩܢܝܢܘܗܝ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܦ ܐܢܐ ܫܒܩܬܗ., «Receive the sign of the baptism like me, and abandon this world and its riches, as also I have abandoned it», *Acta martyrum et sanctorum*, ed. BEDJAN II, p. 643. Such a concept of baptism seems to contain repercussions from very archaic practices.

finding expression in Syriac[24] as well as Arabic[25] sources and that it became a hallowed tradition, able to trouble the church of later generations during times of change[26].

In all these sources we come across a factor which should be taken very seriously. We notice that this problem did not involve only ecclesiastical practice or a sacramental rite to be adapted to the practice generally known in Christendom. That something of greater profundity was involved, indeed, was nothing less than the meaning of Christian life, itself, the very substance of Christian being, and, ultimately, the understanding of the gospel itself. That was what was felt to be at stake. The whole was crystallized in a central concept to which the writings of that earlier period testify.

Fortunately, there is a cycle of still older witnesses which permit us to reach the heart of Syrian Christianity. The Odes of Solomon depict the «saints» as those whose life is not an ordinary one but is characterized by «war»[27]. The term refers to those who persevere in the continuous struggle to gain the victory[28]. In the Acts of Thomas, the chief characteristic of Christian life is the «contest»[29], a concept which finds emphasis in both the sermons and the prayers embodied in this document[30]. It embraces all aspects of asceticism — privation, mortification, but above all, virginity. In one of the sermons, it is said that «holiness is the athlete who is not overcome»[31]. The consciousness of the tireless fighter is the hallmark of a Christian life which looks constantly to Christ as «our true athlete» and «our holy general.»[32].

[24] *Studia syriaca*, ed. Rahmani IV, p. 79.

[25] ويقولون ان الرهبان افضل من العلمانيين ومن لم يكن واهبا لا حظ له مع المسيح ويحتجون فى ذلك بقول سيدنا من لم ياخذ صليبه ويلحقنى فليس لى باهل, «And they say that monks are more excellent than lay people and that whoever is not a monk has no share with Christ, arguing by the word of our Lord: he who does not take his cross and follow me, is not worthy of me», *Livre de la Lampe des ténèbres par Abû'l Barakât*, éd. Villecourt, p. 693.

[26] See Vööbus, *Les messaliens et les réformes de Barṣauma de Nisibe*.

[27] ܩܪܒܐ, *The Odes and Psalms of Solomon* VIII,7; IX,6,9, ed. Harris-Mingana I, p. 27, 29.

[28] Ode IX,12; XVIII,6; XXIX,19, *ibid.*, p. 29, 30, 72. About the Syriac origin of the Odes of Solomon see Vööbus, «Neues Licht zur Frage der Originalsprache der Oden Salomos», p. 275ff.

[29] ܐܓܘܢܐ.

[30] *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Wright I, p. 209, 261.

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 254f.

[32] ܐܬܠܝܛܐ ܕܫܪܪܐ, ܪܒ ܚܝܠܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ, *ibid.*, p. 209.

Another important piece of evidence related to these traditions has not survived in its original form in Syriac but in an Armenian translation. It permits us an instructive insight into the same milieu for a different angle. Here Christianity in the form of the perfect ones, following the «spiritual mode of life»[33] produced by the imitation of Christ's life[34], is clearly separated from an inferior form of Christianity[35]; it also is described as the «contest of war»[36], The document says that the Christians are warriors and «they put it on as an armor»[37]. The same thing is stated[38] repeatedly as is the notion that «the contest of our war is of daily occurrence»[39]. One passage very clearly tells us what all of this really means: «Whosoever expresses the desire to be enlisted, and inscribes himself in the ranks on the role of warriors here in this world, in advance he sets this in his mind — to go forth from his home and his relationships, to depart into other regions and to plunge himself into the contest of the war unto death»[40].

Having thus consulted a number of very ancient and primitive sources, we begin to see some of the background of this type of Christianity. If full value is given to these evidences, then one thing emerges immediately: they bring us face-to-face with the forces which created and upheld the fundamental distinction between two categories of Christians. What the historian learns to recognize here is the fact that we have to do with more than a reform of liturgical and sacramental practice intended to settle basic difficulties between the Syrian traditions and western standards. The sources themselves testify that the issues go very deep and are very important: the concept of «life» was a vital issue in those circles, one in which the Christian calling could not be seen in any other way than in terms of «fight», «contest» and «war», circles which cherished concepts deeply rooted in their ancient traditions, convictions animated and perpetuated by living examples among the spiritual athletes and hallowed by their nameless sacrifices.

[33] *Srboyn Ephremi matenagrowthiwnikh* II, p. 315.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 315.

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 317.

[36] *մարտ պատերազմի*, *ibid.*, p. 318f.

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 315.

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 318f.

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 319.

[40] *որ ցանկացեալ կամի զինուորել, և գրել զինքն 'ի թիւս համարոյ զինուորաց աստէն յերկրի, նախ զայս դնէ 'ի մտի իւրում՝ ելանել 'ի տանէ իւրմէ և յազգատոհմէ իւրմէ, հեռանալ նմա, յայլ գաւառս, և անկանել նմա 'ի մարտ պատերազմի մահուան*, *ibid.*, p. 318.

Further, life does not permit itself to be pressed into stereotyped ritualistic forms. A living force always finds ways to continue its existence, even if under the pressure of external circumstances, ties with the past must be cut. The view is coherent and it demands no great effort of mind to understand that it characterized ascetically oriented Christianity.

On the basis of a careful induction of the several strands of evidence, we have been prepared for a conclusion of first importance. It has become clear that even after the liturgical practices were changed, and baptism and eucharist made available to every Christian, the deeply rooted distinction between the two categories of Christians could not be entirely eliminated. The most vital part of this type of Christianity could never agree to equate itself with other forms and to abandon convictions for which they had been and still were willing to give their lives. This sector most certainly must have found itself compelled to find new ways for consolidating itself in the new situation. Indeed, such a reaction is the one that one would normally expect if the information in the Syrian sources is taken into consideration.

While the sources do not tell us as much as we would want to know and leave too much unsaid, it is natural and inevitable that guess work or supposition have to play a role in interpretation. But it is certainly regrettable when these guesses and suppositions are not controlled by documents. Fortunately in our inquiry we do not need depend from suppositions along. It is the merit of the *Ketābā de-masqātā* to provide us with a realistic glimpse, not only of the feelings and reactions involved in the new phase in the Syrian churches, but also to learn something of the reorientation and consolidation of the spiritual forces in a Christianity which could no longer hold to its archaic past. When the mists begin to clear, we notice strong resistance on the part of the ancient Syrian traditions, a fact which in itself is an indication that we are on the correct track. Advanced development had become a fact, the ordinary believers were admitted to the sacramental life and thus to full church membership. But the ascetically oriented forces knew how to carry forth their archaic and fundamental principle, adapted to the new situation. Though the archaic stream was discolored by the historic media through which it had to pass, in substance it remained the same. As so this document unfolds before our eyes a very important phase in the spiritual history of Syriac Christianity in the period after the transition together with its

implications. A tenacious spirit of resistance is revealed over against the invading Christian Hellenism.

Those whom the author of the *Ketābā de-masqātā* calls «perfect» corresponds very appropriately to the category of the believers within the church who have made the *qeyāmā*[41] «covenant» with the Lord[42] and who thereafter have lived in the state of absolute renunciation. They are the «sons of the covenant»[43].

c. *Its Thoughtworld*

Since the entire thoughtworld of this document rests on the basic distinction between two categories of Christians, that involves in turn two sets of ordinances for these Christians. Although God wants all men to attain perfection, the road towards that goal is full of difficulties and perils. Therefore, in accord with the strength and abilities available to them, the *kīnē* «the righteous ones» have to follow rules which are inferior, called «commandments of faith» or «little commandments»[1]. These rules[2] are moral and cultic regulations[3] and involve deeds of mercy[4]. The behavior and conduct of «the righteous» are governed by the golden rule which was known to the author in both forms, in the negative form:[5] «What you hate do not do to your neighbor»[6] and in the positive form: «Whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them»[7]. The observation of these ordinances leads to justice or righteousness[8] and therefore also to holiness[9].

The perfect ones enter a higher level. They follow the great com-

[41] ܩܝܡܐ.

[42] *Mēmrā* XIX,2, col. 452_3.

[43] ܒܢܝ ܩܝܡܐ, *Mēmrā* X,9, col. 265_{19}.

[1] *Mēmrā* I-II, col. 12ff.; *Mēmrā* XIV, col. 324ff. which is devoted to this subject.

[2] *Mēmrā* I, col. 16, 312f.

[3] These deeds are described in the light of Matth. XXV,34-36, *Mēmrā* III, col. 49.

[4] ܙܕܝܩܘܬܐ, *zadīqūtā*.

[5] Matth. VII,12.

[6] This form appears in the *Didascalia apostolorum*, ed. Vööbus I, and also in ʿAphrēm and Aphrahaṭ; the rendering may go back to the Diatessaron.

[7] *Mēmrā*, col. 148_{4-5}; *Mēmrā* VII, col. 176_{10-11}; *Mēmrā* XV, col. 376_{2-4}, and *Mēmrā* XXII, col. 653_{26}-656_1.

[8] ܟܐܢܘܬܐ, *kīnūtā*.

[9] ܩܕܝܫܘܬܐ, *qadīšūtā*.

mandments[10] or the «commandments of love.» The second *mēmrā* which deals with the perfect ones brings a collection of these rules classified as higher norms[11] taken mainly from the Sermon on the Mount. These decrees go beyond the great commandments as is illustrated by the use of the gospel injunctions[12]: to love the neighbor as oneself[13], and also as expressed through a logion different in form than customarily known: «To love his neighbor more than oneself»[14]. The observance of these commands leads to perfection[15].

The strength of the righteous ones does not reach the level of the imitation of the Lord. That remains the privilege of the perfect ones: their goal is to take up the cross of the Lord. Moreover, the gospel injunctions are supported by additional arguments which bring out that imitation of the Lord more emphatically. Support comes from a logion taken from an apocryphal source: «Whoever does not take up his cross and walk in my footsteps and in my manners ...»[16] The entire Christian outlook is wholly dominated by this central idea of imitation[17] as another similar logion shows plainly: «Who takes up his cross and follows me and imitates me»[18]. Even an agraphon is introduced: «I will make an example to my disciples that they do as I»[19]. The perfect ones become imitators of Jesus' life, a life lived in complete privation.

While the righteous ones remain in the world, the perfect ones have taken up the «perfect cross»[20] in order to follow Christ, to follow the rules of absolute renouncement of the world: «We abandon everything and we walk in the humility of our Lord and his privation»[21]. They renounce family ties[22], marriage[23], and «all the commerce of the

[10] *Mēmrā* I, col. 12ff.; *Mēmrā* XIV, col. 324ff.
[11] *Mēmrā* I, col. 26ff.
[12] *Mēmrā* XVI, col. 388ff.
[13] Matth. XX,39.
[14] The Letter of Barnabas XIX,5.
[15] ܓܡܝܪܘܬܐ, *gemīrūtā*.
[16] ܡܢ ܕܠܐ ܠܡ ܫܩܠ ܨܠܝܒܗ ܘܐܬܐ ܒܥܩܒܬܝ, ܘܒܕܘܒܪܝ, *Mēmrā* XX, col. $569_{15\text{-}16}$.
[17] *Mēmrā* III, col. 66; *Mēmrā* X, col. 268; *Mēmrā* XIV, col. 327.
[18] ܘܫܩܠ ܨܠܝܒܗ ܘܐܬܐ ܒܬܪܝ, ܘܡܬܕܡܐ ܠܝ, *Mēmrā* III, col. $56_{1\text{-}2}$; cf. *Mēmrā* XXX, col. $920_{19\text{-}20}$.
[19] ܘܐܗܘܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܚܘܪܐ ܠܬܠܡܝܕܝ, ܕܢܗܘܘܢ ܢܥܒܕܘܢ ܐܟܘܬܝ, *Mēmrā* II, col. 29.
[20] *Mēmrā* VII, col. 141.
[21] *Mēmrā* I, col. 16.
[22] *Mēmrā* XI, col. $475_{7\text{-}10}$; *Mēmrā* XXX, col. 920_{22}.
[23] Before all else the solitary is a virgin.

world»[24]. In the *mēmrā* «On the bodily and spiritual ministry» it is said: «So whosoever carries his hidden cross, separates himself from the ground and from its tilling, and from every labor and from every solicitude»[25]. As such, they have «abandoned the earth»[26] and become «strangers»[27] and «aliens»[28] to it.[29]. The perfect disciple who renounces the world becomes an *īhīdāyā*, «a solitary»[30], a term[31] which in the earliest times implies[32] abandonment of one's family, especially one's wife[33]. They have left their homes in order to undertake a wandering life according to the example of the master who had «no place where to rest his head»[34]. *Peregrinatio* becomes the hallmark of their life. They wander around in deserts, on mountains, and on cold days they appear at the door of believers and expect something to eat from them[35]. They possess no more than the «garment and food for the day»[36]. However, a spiritual meaning is also carried with it — so that the «solitary» lives in the society, making a physical withdrawal no obligation.

The righteous ones have three fundamental obligations: fasting, prayer and alms. The work insists on the positive importance of these ascetic practices which involve the body as well as the soul[37], even demanding fasting in its physical sense[38]. Stress is laid upon the fast that they are obliged to practice charity in order to fulfil that which is related in the gospel for those who are called «blessed of the Father»[39].

[24] *Mēmrā* III,10, col. 68.
[25] *Ibid.*, col. 68.
[26] *Mēmrā* XV,16, col. 374.
[27] ܢܘܟܪܝܐ, *nūkrāyē*.
[28] ܐܟܣܢܝܐ, *'aksnāyē*, ξένος.
[29] *Mēmrā* V,18, col. 132f.
[30] ܝܚܝܕܝܐ, «single one», or «the one being alone».
[31] Vööbus, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient* I, p. 106ff.
[32] Beck, «Ein Beitrag zur Terminologie des ältesten syrischen Mönchtums», p. 254ff.
[33] *Mēmrā* XXV, col. 737. About the farfetched theory that the Syriac term roots in theological meaning, see Adam, «Grundbegriffe des Mönchtums in sprachlicher Sicht», p. 209ff. In this respect the logion 16 in the Gospel of Thomas throws significant light: «There will be three against two and two against three; the father against the son and the son against the father, and they will stand alone (μοναχός)».
[34] Cf. Matth. VIII,20, *Mēmrā* XV,13, col. 365ff.
[35] *Mēmrā* XIII, col. 312.
[36] *Mēmrā* XIII, col. 317; cf. *Mēmrā* XVI, col. 401.
[37] *Mēmrā* X, col. 253_{26}-256_{6}.
[38] *Mēmrā* XX, col. 557_{21}.
[39] Namely Matth. XXV,34, *Mēmrā* II,2, col. 48f.; *Mēmrā* III,10, col. 65.

However, the religious life of the perfect ones moves on entirely different level. Illustrative of it is the support adduced from an apocryphal source[40] where the promise of Christ regarding «the place of my rest»[41] supplements the gospel logion. Now all activities of the perfect ones are marked by interiorization and spiritualization. Their fasting is no longer confined, as in the case of the righteous ones, to fixed days and to refraining from food, but consists of continence which is universal — fasting is abstinence total in character. In describing this, our document uses a special term. This disposition is described by the phrase «fasting to the world»[42] which in an interesting way is related to a text in the Gospel of Thomas[43]. There is no question about its meaning. The term «world» is figuratively understood to mean evil. Beyond the various kinds of fasting, which also includes from solid foods, there is a higher form of fasting for perfect disciples — to remove from all evils[44]. That is «fasting to the world». Another passage is expressed more precisely as «fasting from the world and its delight»[45].

Prayer, too, is not limited to certain hours as in the case of the righteous ones, but is continuous[46].

The charity of the perfect ones, since they have nothing material to give to others, is entirely of a spiritual kind. They must become the sources of great love for all men, founded upon extreme humility. Their behavior is governed by forgiveness, humility and kindness. Having become free of all worldly cares and worries, the perfect ones can devote themselves entirely to their true calling, namely to preach, to teach the people, to inspire those who have the desire for a higher calling and to pray for the people.

This leads our inquiry to still another dimension in the distinction between these two categories. The spiritual élan is contingent upon the

[40] As fulfillment of the promise to give «judgement and rest», *Mēmrā* XXVI, col. 61[609].

[41] ܐܬܪܐ ܕܢܝܚܬܝ, *Mēmrā* XX, col. $565_{20\text{-}21}$, as a supplement to John XIV,23.

[42] ܨܘܡܗ ܕܠܥܠܡܐ, *Mēmrā* XV,16, col. $373_{18\text{-}19}$; $373_{23\text{-}24}$, and *Mēmrā* XXXIX,6, col. $828_{12\text{-}13}$; the rendering in the transitive construction agrees with the logion of Oxyrhynchus I,2. About this double form of the formulations, see GUILLAUMONT, «Νηστεύειν τὸν κόσμον», p. 15ff.

[43] Logion 27: «If you do not fast to the world, you will not find the kingdom». Cf. BAKER, «Fasting to the World», p. 291ff.

[44] *Mēmrā* XXIX, col. $824_{19\text{-}20}$.

[45] ܨܝܡܝܢ ܡܢ ܥܠܡܐ ܘܡܢ ܪ̈ܓܝܓܬܗ, *Mēmrā* IV, col. $89_{24\text{-}25}$.

[46] *Mēmrā* VII,20, col. 184f.

measure of the spirit which each category receives. The righteous ones have a limited measure of the spirit. They experience the spirit that reckons with their limited capacity and therefore can give them only weaker food. This is illustrated by the Pauline word about the spirit as a guarantee, namely as *'urbānā de-rūḥā*[47] expressed in an interesting formulation[48]. For the author, this certainly represents the Pauline logion about the spirit[49]. It clearly denotes the limited measure of the spirit[50].

For the perfect, the spirit is no longer available in the form of the *'urbānā de-rūḥā* for they have received the fullness of the spirit — the greatest of all the gifts[51], the spirit of the Paraclete[52], the spirit that makes them free[53]. As a result, they can live «in the house of the Father» fully liberated in the realm of freedom.

While the righteous ones need the guidance of the perfect ones, the perfect need no such intermediaries since they have direct access to God. While they live bodily in this world, their mind and spirit converses in the spiritual realm in the presence of God[54].

These observations lead to the conception of the church. The righteous ones need the church with all its sacraments, with baptism and with the eucharist therein dispensed. The visible church, established by the Lord, is «the blessed mother which educates all children»[55]. The ecclesiastical institutions, the altar, baptism and priesthood go back to the same divine source. However, the visible church has a serious limitation: it is not the field for the operation of the Paraclete[56].

[47] ܥܘܪܒܢܐ ܕܪܘܚܐ is a term which Kmosko did not understand.

[48] The term in fact is a Hebrew vocabule ערבון (cf. Gen. XXXVIII,17, 18, 20) in Arabic عربون *'arabūn*. This Semitic term, probably through the intermediary of the Phoenician slipped into the Greek under the form ἀρραβών. This ancient Semitic vocabule has been replaced by the transcription by the Greek vocabule and has become the usual term in Syriac. See GUILLAMONT, «Les 'arrhes de l'Esprit' dans le *Livre des Degrés*», p. 107ff.

[49] Cf. II Cor. I,22; V,5.

[50] *Mēmrā* III, col. $72_{6\text{-}13}$.

[51] *Ibid.*, col. 72.

[52] «Therefore no one receives the Paraclete as long as he serves bodily when his (status of) taking and giving and his mind is bound on earth», *Mēmrā* III, col. 76.

[53] «And when the Paraclete comes, man knows the whole truth, then little by little fear is lifted entirely from him and then he is freed», *Mēmrā* V, col. 136; cf. col. 141.

[54] *Mēmrā* XV,18, col. 382.

[55] ܘܐܡܐ ܒܪܝܟܬܐ ܕܗܝ ܡܪܒܝܐ ܠܟܠܗܘܢ ܝܠܘ̈ܕܐ, *Mēmrā* XII, col. 292.

[56] The document refers to the seven deacons in the Book of Acts among whom only one received the Paraclete, namely Stephen who left the office of caring for worldly things, *Mēmra* III, col. 77.

Over against the visible church, its altar and its institutions, there is a spiritual church and altar before which the angels worship with all the saints and Christ himself as priest[57]. This is the sphere in which the Paraclete works and this church as a result is «the mother of all the living and perfected ones.»[58]. In this church, an invisible baptism takes place with the gift of the Spirit as does invisible communion[59]. Entry into the invisible church is entry into the spiritual home of Christians on the level of perfection. They are absorbed through the illumination of the Spirit. In this respect, too, the *Liber graduum* draws from very ancient Syrian sources[60]. The perfect are initiated into all the heavenly mysteries. In citing a canonical text[61] regarding the heavenly secrets, this supplement is added: «He will understand the power of my mysteries»[62]. Thus the perfect ones enter the realm of the mysteries and of all knowledge of the secrets[63]. The Spirit reveals the entire truth, the mysteries of heaven, since the perfect already live in this celestial sphere[64].

Our source can tell us even more about this spiritual realm. The reception of the spirit of the Paraclete, the spirit of fullness, is described as an event which is a new baptism. «A baptism with fire and spirit» introduces the perfect ones to the celestial church which is «the church of the heart»[65], far above the visible church. It restitutes the status in which Adam was before his fall and opens access to «the tree of life»[66]. Although the solitary lives on earth, in the spirit he lives in the celestial places and has reached a status like the angels[67]. Here our source displays a conception which differs from everything that has commonly

[57] *Mēmrā* XII, col. 288: «... is revealed to us the church of heaven, and the altar of the Spirit, and we offer on it confession by prayer of our hearts, col. 289, 292.

[58] ܐܡܐ ܕܟܠܗܘܢ ܚܝܐ ܘܡܫܡܠܝܐ, *Mēmrā* XII, col. 293.

[59] *Ibid.*, col. 296.

[60] *The Odes of Solomon*, ed. HARRIS-MINGANA, p. 12. The Spirit produces «an illuminated Son of God», *Ode* XXXVI,1, *ibid.*, 78.

[61] John XIV, 15ff.

[62] *Mēmrā* XV, col. $376_{20\text{-}22}$.

[63] «Then the Lord opens to him heavenly doors and he enters and is made glad by the riches of mysteries», *Mēmrā* VI, col. 144; *Mēmrā* VIII, col. 197; light appears to them, *Mēmrā* XII, col. 289, and «they see the Lord in the mirror in their hearts», *Mēmrā* XIV, col. 328.

[64] *Mēmrā* VI,2, col. 141; *Mēmrā* XV,18, col. 381.

[65] ܥܕܬܐ ... ܕܠܒܐ, *Mēmrā* XII,4, col. 293, 296.

[66] *Mēmrā* XX,7, col. 544.

[67] *Mēmrā* XV,3, col. 341.

been understood[68]. The way of the perfect one «leads to the house of the Lord and to his bridal chamber[69] he enters in»[70], a logion which reminds us of a logion in the Gospel of Thomas[71].

d. *The Value of the Source*

As this study has shown, the *Ketābā de-masqātā* deserves our exceptional interest. It is one of the most ancient works which has come to us from ancient Syriac literature devoted to the subject of spiritual life and asceticism. As such it is a very precious source about the very archaic spirituality in Christendom in Mesopotamia. It unfolds pneumatic mysticism, characteristic of the archaic Syrian spirituality indigenous to Mesopotamian Christianity. It is an exceptional opportunity to be permitted to here so deep a glimpse into such an important phase in the history of spirituality in the lands washed by the Tigris and the Euphrates — in a document whose antiquity and content make it an incomparable source, valuable beyond price for its contribution to our knowledge of archaic Syrian spirituality.

It is a matter of profound regret that questions regarding the origin and circumstances of a work as the *Ketābā de-masqātā* must remain enshrouded in darkness. Internal evidence is virtually absent. The author refers several times to a persecution of which he seems to be a contemporary. Kmosko assumes these persecutions to have been those which took place under Diocletianus from which it would follow that the work must have been composed around 320[1]. He assumed that the author lived in Roman territory. This is quite possible. But neither is it impossible that the author lived in Persian territory[2] in which case references would point to the persecutions which took place under Šahpūr[3]. This question must remain open due to lack of evidence.

Other assumptions which have been made regarding the age and origin

[68] The Spirit as a guarantee was understood only as an anticipatory participation and only partial since the gift in full can be given only in the heavenly kingdom.

[69] ܥܐܠ ܠܓܢܘܢܗ.

[70] *Mēmrā* XIX, col. 513_{12}.

[71] Logion 75: «Many are standing at the door, but the solitaries are (the) only ones who will enter the bridal chamber».

[1] Praefatio, p. CL.

[2] Here a reference to the Little Zab, a tributary to the Tigris, *Mēmrā* XXX,14, col. 895 could be interpreted in this way; however, not too much importance can be ascribed to it.

[3] These persecutions lasted for a long time, namely from the year 339 until 379.

of this document are entirely worthless. Hausherr's assertion that it must be placed after ʿAphrēm is entirely arbitrary[4]. His other assertion that the date of its origin must be earlier than the adoption of the Pešīṭtā cannot help us inasmuch as he presumed to know more about the origin of the Pešīṭtā and its role in the textual history of the New Testament[5] than the facts can support[6].

In conclusion it is safe to say that the *Ketābā de-masqātā* is one of the most ancient monuments in Syriac literature, perhaps even the most ancient of major works.

2. The Taḥwyātā of ʾAphrahaṭ

a. *The Source*

The treatises[1] of which the first ten were completed by ʾAphrahaṭ in the year 337 and the succeeding twelve in the year 344, constitute as a corpus one of the oldest monuments in the history of Syrian spirituality. He called his treatises *taḥwyātā*[2] «demonstrations». They are devoted to principle aspects of the spiritual life together with several other subjects not directly related to the issues of spirituality.

This collection was supplemented by another treatise which deals with the symbolical treatment of the Old Testament history under the title «On the Grape». Also this is dated — it was written in the year 345.

The tradition regarding the literary legacy of ʿAphrahaṭ has been beset with confusion. Already Gennadius made a wrong start[3], ascribing the works of ʾAphrahaṭ to Jaʿqōb, bishop of Nisibis[4]. Thus the greater part of the treatises, altogether nineteen treatises have survived in an ancient Armenian version[5].

Be it also mentioned in passing that one treatise, namely the fifth, has emerged in an Ethiopic version[6].

[4] «*Quanam aetate prodierit 'Liber Graduum'* ?», p. 495ff.
[5] Vööbus, *Studies in the Gospel Text in Syriac* I, p. 46ff.
[6] *Ibid.*, Vol. II.
[1] Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, p. 30f.
[2] ܬܚܘܝܬܐ.
[3] *De viris illustribus*, ed. Richardson, p. 1.
[4] See page 27.
[5] *Jacobi, ep. Nisibeni sermones*, ed. Antonelli.
[6] Ed. Pereira, in; Festschrift Nöldeke.

b. *Salient Ideas*

ʾAphrahaṭ begins his work with a treatise on faith[1] stating «that the faith is put together from many things and decorated with many colors»[2] and that this is what his undertaking is intended to explain. He emphasizes that faith is the foundation upon which the entire development towards spiritual maturity in the movement towards perfection is based[3]. He states: «As soon as a man believes, he loves, and as soon as he loves, he hopes, and as soon as he hopes, he will be righteous, and as soon as he is righteous, he will be completed, and as soon as he is completed, he will be perfect»[4]. Drawing upon the reservoir of strength in the Scriptures, ʾAphrahaṭ makes his point of departure as strong as possible.

ʾAphrahaṭ allows us a glimpse into the spiritual milieu of his time when he states: «In our time there are such ones who elect themselves to become solitaries, ascetics and saints»[5]. The term which he uses here is *iḥīdāyā*[6] and *qadīšā*. In another place the term *ʾabīlā* also emerges[7]. Regrettably, ʾAphrahaṭ does not happen to address the question whether these individuals espoused the ascetic life within the precincts of civilization or fled the world for the life of loneliness in desolate places. In his treatises no hint to the effect that these ascetics left the communities of fellow Christians to go into the deserts or into the mountains is to be found. In this respect, we are left with a picture which is at once as dim as it is hazy. Deductions in favor of the one or the other alternative ultimately rest upon an argumentum e silentio.

With regard to ascetic practices and manners, ʾAphrahaṭ's account gives us a relatively clear picture. Among these, fasting occupies a vital place. Indeed, an especial treatise is devoted to fasting. ʾAphrahaṭ entitles it: «Pure fasting before God»[8]. ʾAphrahaṭ describes the benefits of fasting as a «weapon against evil and a shield which repells[9] the arrows

[1] *Dem.*, I,1.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*, I,2.
[5] *Dem.*, VII,11.
[6] ܝܚܝܕܝܐ, Adam's theory, see his «Grundbegriffe des Mönchtums in sprachlicher Sicht», p. 209ff., must be rejected since the Syriac term has nothing to do with the concept of μονογενής, cf. John I,14.
[7] ܐܒܝܠܐ, *Dem.*, VI,6, col. 265.
[8] *Dem.*, III,1.
[9] *Lit.*: «receives».

of the enemy»[10]. For 'Aphrahaṭ, however, this term is all encompassing[11], the quintessence of true life dedicated to God: fasting not only involves abstinence from food and drink, meat and wine, but also incorporates holiness and virginity, the abdication of things of the world as well as grieving and mourning. Regarding the latter, mourning, he states: «Another is fasting when he becomes sad in order that he might please to the Lord in affliction»[12]. The concept of fasting in 'Aphrahaṭ is so comprehensive that it even embraces obedience to ethical obligations.

True prayer for 'Aphrahaṭ was interpreted in terms of a pure sacrifice[13]. The power of the prayer is forcefully presented as the source of encouragement and of enthusiasm supported by the rich testimony of the scriptural sources.

Among ascetic practices, vigils are especially mentioned. The ascetics are exhorted to awaken again and again, to watch, to sing and to pray whenever sleep threatened to overcome them[14].

Other spiritual qualities pertinent to the life of the ascetics and certain virtues are treated in treatises separately devoted to them[15]. Other requirements, too, were necessary for the proper conduct of the ascetics[16]. Even in attitude, their way of life had to make their devotion and consecration visible, for example, avoiding laughter and a gay mood[17]. These ascetic figures are introduced as athletes[18] and their ethos characterized by such concepts as «struggle, contest, fight and war against the enemy».

The most excellent virtue, however, is virginity, an issue which had become all the more acute because of the slander and reviling emanating from Jews[19]. 'Aphrahaṭ presents his position in very clear terms: «The virgin life is much more excellent and more pleasant before God»[20]. He strengthens his position by the dictum that virginity is «the heavenly lot,

[10] *Ibid.*
[11] *Dem.*, III,1.
[12] ܘܐܝܬ ܕܨܐܡ ܕܚܘܫܐ ܡܬܟܐܒ ܕܢܫܦܪ ܠܡܪܗ ܒܐܘܠܨܢܐ, col. 100.
[13] *Dem.*, IV,1.
[14] *Dem.*, IV,1, col. 256.
[15] *Dem.*, II is on love, *Dem.*, IX is on humility, *Dem.*, XVIII is on holiness, and *Dem.*, XX is on charity.
[16] It is not proper to make use of decorated cloth, finery of garments, adornment of the hair, aromatic oils and attendance of dinner parties, *Dem.*, VI,8.
[17] *Dem.*, IV,1, col. 272f.
[18] *Dem.*, IV,1, col. 265.
[19] This tenet has brought conflicts with the Jews, *Dem.*, XVIII.
[20] *Dem.*, XVIII,5.

the fellowship of the angels of the heaven — for there is nothing that is like unto it»[21]. As over against marriage which has its purpose in the procreation of children but which has no ethical or spiritual value, virginity is the way for a true Christian life. What is really involved in this issue is revealed in 'Aphrahaṭ's exegesis of the passage in Genesis about the man who in taking a wife leaves father and mother, puts this issue into sharp relief[22]. In his interpretation of the passage, his estimate of marriage and its totally negative character, is brilliantly described in a way which puts the issue with all the clarity one could desire. His text deserves to be quoted in extenso: «Why does he leave his father and mother? This is the explanation: 'As long as a man has not taken a wife, he loves and honors God, his Father and the Holy Spirit, his mother, and he has no other love; and when someone has taken a wife, he leaves the Father and the Mother, mentioned above, and his mind will be seized by this world, and his mind and his heart and his thoughts will be drawn away from God into the world'»[23]. Given such a perspective, it is only to be expected that the person and the life of Jesus would confirm this position: «This is suitable for the solitaries, for those, who have taken the heavenly yoke on themselves and are disciples of Christ — for it is fitting for the disciples of Christ that they are similar to their master Christ»[24].

'Aphrahaṭ entreats the ascetics to recognize what an excellent advantage they have elected for themselves: «For it is beautiful, my dear one, that (the one) who carries the yoke of Christ, keeps it in purity»[25]. They really have to realize how great a relief it is to have received such a gift through their decision: «And all these who are betrothed to Christ, are far from the law and freed from the punishments of the daughters of Eve»[26]. The bliss which now devolves upon them in fact is indescribable: «The Only One[27] from the bosom of the Father, gladdens all the solitaries»[28]. It is with the rapture of great profundity that 'Aphrahaṭ describes this bliss: «All the pure virgins who have betrothed themselves

[21] *Dem.*, VI,15.
[22] Genesis II,24.
[23] *Dem.*, XVIII,10, col. 840.
[24] *Dem.*, VI,8.
[25] *Dem.*, VI,4.
[26] *Dem.*, VI,7.
[27] John I,14.
[28] *Dem.*, VI,7.

to Christ, light their lamps and go with their bridegroom into their chamber»[29].

In the interest of the virtue of virginity, ʿAphrahaṭ has put a theologumenon into propaganda on its behalf. It also must have become a source of inspiration for the ascetics who have accepted the yoke of Christ. Using the Pauline imagery of the psychic and pneumatic body[30], only those who have chosen perfection are given the glorious outlook that will take place in the final resurrection — all those who have grieved the spirit of Christ, however, will at that time remain naked, retaining only their psychic body[31].

c. *The Covenant of the Ascetics*

A unique opportunity is granted us to enrich our understanding about the ascetic phenomenon, even to be permitted a glimpse into that milieu at the oath taken by ascetics. These precious texts have been preserved in the seventh treatise of ʾAphrahaṭ[1]. There we are brought face-to-face with something so unique that the texts themselves deserve to be introduced in extenso.

First of all, the text unfolds before our eyes the last act before baptism. We see the candidates for baptism before us and we are allowed to listen to the admonitions delivered on this occasion. These consist of stern warnings addressed to the candidates to search their hearts, to test whether their devotion is of the tensile strength of steel. The text reads as follows: «Anyone who is afraid, let him retreat from the struggle, that he might not break the heart of his brothers as (well as) his own heart; and any one who plants a vineyard, let him retreat to service of it, that he might not think of it and (thus) be conquered in the war. And any one who has betrothed a wife and wills to take her, let him retreat and rejoice with his wife. And any one who builds a house, let him retreat to it, that he might not remember his house and will not fight wholly»[2]. Such

[29] *Ibid.*
[30] 1 Cor. XV,44.
[31] *Dem.*, VI,15.
[1] *Dem.*, VII.
[2] [illegible], *Dem.*, VII,18, col. 341.

warnings in their seriousness become necessary in the light of the goal set for ascetics: «For solitaries is the struggle suitable, because their faces are set for that which is before them, and they do not remember anything that lies behind them, for their treasures are before them; and anything that they spoil all (belongs) to themselves, and they receive their profit abundantly»[3].

After this sober admonition, after the hesitant candidates have left, then those who officiate at the liturgy are charged with the duty of examining the readiness of the remaining ones once again, and to submit them to a new screening. This action together with admonitions takes place shortly before the rite of baptism. The text reads: «Any one who has set his heart upon the state of marriage, let him marry before baptism, lest he fall in the struggle and be killed. Any one who fears this part of the contest, let him retreat, lest he break the heart of his brothers like his own heart. Any one who loves possessions, let him retreat from the army, lest when the battle becomes hard for him, he will remember his possessions and retreat. Any one who retreats from the struggle, shame belongs to him. Everyone who has not decided (the matter) for himself and has not yet put on the armor, if he retreats he is not blamed. But everyone who has chosen (this) for himself and puts on the armor, if he retreats from the struggle, laughter belongs to him»[4]. The warnings are given a great urgency in the light of the goal of the ascetics: «To him who renounces himself, the contest is suitable, because he does not remember anything which is behind him and does not retreat to it»[5].

[3] [illegible], *Dem.*, VII,18, col. 341, 344.
[4] [illegible], *Dem.*, VII,20, col. 345.
[5] [illegible], *Dem.*, VII,20, col. 345.

The covenant character of the self-dedication of the ascetics is here brought to the fore, and the decision for a life in perfection occurs within this heavily-laden religious atmosphere.

Still more can be elicited about the imagery connected with these decisive moments. It becomes evident via the biblical typology, as developed by ʾAphrahaṭ, to substantiate the foregoing, most especially in the episode of Gideon[6]. The episode, even in Origen[7] had already been employed as a kind of mystery prefiguring the severity of the testing and the covenant character of the decision made by the ascetics, obviously connected originally with baptism open only to the ascetic elite. ʾAphrahaṭ writes: «Also, when he had proved them by water, of ten thousand only three hunderd men were elected to engage in the battle; moreover, this agrees with the word that our Lord spoke: 'Many are called and few are chosen'»[8]. Thus in the quoted sections the act of baptism characterized by the mystery drawn from the episode of Gideon, demonstrates that only a few passed this trial, whereas the great majority was left behind. It is also striking that baptism itself is called «the water of proof»[9]. The same idea is reiterated: «Everyone who is valiant — the water proves him»[10].

d. *Church Historical Perspectives*

Since the spiritual content of the treatises of ʾAphrahaṭ is enshrouded in phenomena which have been found to be enigmatic and puzzling and have created misunderstanding and confusion about the position of the ascetics in the church of ʾAphrahaṭ, it is as inevitable as it is neccessary to deal with church historical perspectives in this connection.

The treatises of ʾAphrahaṭ present us with materials of deep religious and spiritual content but unfortunately the study of them has been diverted by the several questions which have been raised[1].

[6] Judges VII, 3ff.

[7] Homilae in Jude; Origen understands those excluded as those who remain catechumens; regarding those who passed the test, Origen writes: «Trecenti ergo soli qui sacramenti huius imaginem præformabant, isti electi, isti probati, isti ad victoriam consecrati, qui ex ipso numeri sacramento obtinere adversarios possunt», MIGNE, XII, 951-990.

[8] *Dem.*, VII, 19, col. 344f.

[9] *Dem.*, VII, 18, col. 344_6.

[10] ܟܠ ܕܚܠܝܨ ܡܝ̈ܐ ܒܚܢܝܢ ܠܗ, *ibid.*, col. 344.

[1] VÖÖBUS, «Die Anweisungen von ʿAphrahaṭ», p. 152ff.

One problem became a source of confusion long ago, namely, to whom do these ascetics, designated *benai qeyāmā* and *bart qeyāmā* refer? Already the publication of the critical edition of the treatises of ʾAphrahaṭ gave a misleading impression that they are monks. The title *De monachis* which Parisot gave to the treatise on the *benai qeyāmā*[2], indeed, is very misleading. In this connection, one must also mention the fact that the Armenian version of the treatises of ʾAphrahaṭ is very careful in its rendering of the term *benai qeyāmā*, avoiding the term «monk» by using a word which means «devout»[3].

Another problem which has created discussion and controversy concerns the rite of baptism[4]. The crucial question is this, whether in the church of ʾAphrahaṭ baptism was the sole prerogative of ascetics or whether it belonged to all church people in general. In this respect the treatises of ʾAphrahaṭ have been found to be disappointing by those students who have approached this document in the expectation of finding very specific information about the practices of this ascetic institution. However, the homiletical and paraenetical language is so predominant that very little room is left for the concrete data in which research is interested.

To repeat, the problem centers on the question: who were the «solitaries», the members of the *qeyāmā*[5] and what exactly was their position[6]? These are the problems which provoked the controversy which has plagued scholars. It all began when Burkitt published his theory with its far-reaching consequence, namely, that the Christian community according to ʿAphrahaṭ consisted only of baptized celibates to which a wider body of adherents, not members, was attached[7]. This hypothesis was accepted by such scholars as von Harnack[8], Ficker[9] and Plooij[10]. But there were those who remained suspicious. Connolly opposed this interpretation[11]. Some like Schwen,

[2] *Dem.*, II, col. 239.

[3] *ուխտաւորք*, *Sermones*, ed. ANTONELLI, p. 203.

[4] DUNCAN, *Baptism in the Demonstrations of Aphraates*.

[5] NAGEL, «Zum problem der Bundessöhne», p. 152ff.

[6] JANSMA, «Aphraates Demonstration VII, 18 and 20», p. 21ff.

[7] *Early Eastern Christianity*, p. 127.

[8] *Mission und Ausbreitung*, p. 692.

[9] TLZ, XXXII (1907), p. 432f.

[10] «Aphrahat's Kirche ist eine Cölibatskirche», «Enkratitische Glosse», p. 8.

[11] «Monasticism», p. 522ff.

felt that Burkitt's hypothesis should be modified[12]; so did Müller[13]. But even after a very long period of debate, Burkitt found no reason to change his position but clung to it, adamantly affirming that 'Aphrahaṭ has classified Christians as consisting first of baptized full members and then as penitents or general adherents[14].

It has become obvious that answers to these questions do not lie on the surface. Greater efforts are necessary to penetrate into this source in order to understand the ecclesiastical and historical premises of 'Aphrahaṭ's contemporary Christianity. The outcome of such a penetrating analysis of the treatises of 'Aphrahaṭ is this, that Christianity during 'Aphrahaṭ's period in Persia was living through a very important epoch, historically speaking. In this regard, the sources bring forth evidence[15]; certain indications are also to be found in other sources[16].

In the course of research it also becomes necessary to pay attention to a literary-critical analysis of 'Aphrahaṭ's treatises. This has opened up a new avenue, namely, that the body of material embedded in his treatises is not all of the same mould. Disparate[17] materials, strata and layers have found their way into the work and stand side by side in this literary work. The way in which various exegetical traditions have been used without having been harmonized also points to the true physiognomy of these materials. Indeed, 'Aphrahaṭ's treatises constitute a mine of wealth including remnants of very archaic traditions and others during the stage of transition. Even remnants of an archaic liturgy have been included[18].

[12] Modified so that 'Aphrahaṭ would appear in the midst of the course of development towards the loosening of the radical standards and not at the beginning, *Afrahat*, p. 98f.

[13] «Ehelosigkeit», p. 77. However, in his *Kirchengeschichte* I, p. 465 there is a certain shift toward Burkitt's position.

[14] In a study written 38 years after he first presented his hypothesis he writes: «The penitent is the general adherent who has yet not volunteered for the sacramental life; the son (or daughter) of the Covenant is the baptized Christian, who is admitted to partake of the Eucharist», *Syriac-Speaking Christianity*, p. 499.

[15] The way the synodical letter sent to the congregations is formulated, *Dem.*, XIV, col. 573ff., leaves the impression that the church at that time did not consist of ascetics.

[16] The acts of martyrdom of Šem'ōn seem to have preserved a significant hint. This appears in a scene which took place after the proclamation of Shahpuhr's edict in the year 340, when the officials began with the destruction of the churches in Seleucia-Ctesiphon. In this report the *qeyāmā* is mentioned separately and other Christians are spoken of as belonging tho the church, too. They are even called «sheep», a term which, according to ancient usage was an intimate epithet, used in connection with full Christians; *Acta martyrum*, ed. BEDJAN II, p. 148.

[17] FIEY, «La Démonstration XIV d'Aphrahate», p. 449ff.

[18] VÖÖBUS, *Celibacy, a Requirement for Admission to Baptism*, p. 49ff.

In this way premises have emerged for a methodologically proper approach to this kind of material[19].

Only in this way is it possible to recognize the ecclesiastical conditions which existed at the time 'Aphrahaṭ lived and wrote his treatises. During his time his «solitaries» constituted a spiritual elite within the church of baptized members enjoying the sacramental life. These questions have been treated sufficiently elsewhere[20] and do not need to be repeated here.

3. The Monastic Legacy of 'Aphrēm

a. *Introduction*

'Aphrēm's youth falls within the period of Ja'qōb, bishop of Nisibis (308-338). He describes this famous ascetic[1] as a severe educator of the young Christian church of Nisibis. His gifts to the church of Nisibis certainly involve also commitment of the young 'Aphrahaṭ himself: «In all the exuberance (of life) at the level of childhood, I had a feared educator; his rod held me back from play and his warnings from sin and his threat from softness»[2]. Here 'Aphrēm certainly includes himself among those who had received such introduction and education and applies it to his own career in the ascetic way of life.

A powerful force in the furtherance of monasticism throughout the centuries was fueled from the literary storage of this giant in Syriac literary creation, and he well knew how to use it skillfully. In order to understand the significance of this properly, it must be kept in mind that 'Aphrēm stands without a rival in the entire rank of the most outstanding authors the Syrians can call their own.

For this work, a particular division of this literary legacy comes into account. In the first place, the greatest importance belongs to those writings which were devoted entirely to ascetics and the furtherance of their movement. We refer to his writings which eulogize the lives and the accomplishments of the ascetics and solitaries and other spiritual athletes. There is even a cycle of such writings[3]. Time complicated pathways in the transmission of manuscripts have added also other

[19] VÖÖBUS, «Methodologisches zum Studium der Anweisungen 'Aphrahaṭs», p. 25ff.

[20] VÖÖBUS, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient* I, p. 184ff.

[1] *Carmina Nisibena* XIX,5, ed. BECK, XIV,4, *ibid.*

[2] *Carmina Nisibena* XVI,17, *ibid.*

[3] VÖÖBUS, *Literary-Critical and Historical Studies*, p. 59ff.

similar but unauthentic writings to them. Methodologically, a critical sifting is necessary and this has been done[4].

The rich literary creation[5] from 'Aphrēm's pen[6] is saturated with propaganda in the interest of ascetic ideals. Among them, one sector offers particular service for the present study. From the genre of his sermons, homilies and treatises, a particular group must be singled out, namely, those which were composed on themes directly connected to asceticism. One particular cycle treats the theme concerning virginity[7] and another is devoted to fasting[8]. Special mention must be made of *mēmrē* devoted to two celebrated ascetics, Abraham Qīdūnāyā and Jūlyānā Sābā[9]. These panegyrics offer additional insights.

A very valuable source has emerged to enrich the records at our disposal. These homilies have been preserved in an Armenian translation[10]. In this version the sources have brought new and precious texts to light[11].

In singling out the most important sources which come into account, it must be added that even his commentaries have preserved precious materials. This is particularly in connection with his commentary on the Diatessaron in the original Syriac[12] as well as the Armenian version[13]. These, too, provide valuable insights[14].

It was in ways such as this that the voice of this giant inspired ascetics and monks throughout the centuries.

b. *'Aphrēm's Monastic Thought in His General Works*

Among 'Aphrēm's leading thoughts certain salient features must be brought out.

'Aphrēm frequently speaks of continence which he called sanctity. For this he found support in Jewish traditions according to which Noah and

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 86.
[5] BAUMSTARK, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, p. 31ff.
[6] CHABOT, *Littérature syriaque*, ORTIZ DE URBINA, *Patrologia syriaca.*
[7] *Hymnen de virginitate*, ed. BECK.
[8] *Hymnen de ieiunio*, ed. BECK.
[9] *Hymnen auf Abraham Kidunaya und Julianos Saba*, ed. BECK.
[10] *Hymnes d'Éphrem conservées en version arménienne*, éd. MARIÈS-MERCIER.
[11] See also GRAFFIN, in: *Orient* Syr. VI (1961), p. 219ff., which represents a French translation of the hymns on virginity, namely II-VII and IX.
[12] *Commentaire de l'Évangile concordant*, éd. LELOIR.
[13] *Commentaire de l'Évangile concordant, arm.*, éd. LELOIR.
[14] LELOIR, *Doctrines et méthodes de S. Éphrem d'après son commentaire.*

his sons in the ark practiced continence — this is evident in his commentaries on Genesis[1] and the Diatessaron[2] as well as his *mēmrē*[3].

Far above continence is virginity[4]. 'Aphrēm's monastic thought is utterly devoted to the virtue of virginity. Virginity is the prime feature characterizing the ascetic. Among any and all forms of ascetic life, it occupies the first and foremost place in the life of ascetics. 'Aphrēm eulogizes virginity[5] and inspires reverence for this virtue, insisting as he does on the lofty and glorious idea of emulating this virtue, even with a sense of pride. He does this in his hymns on virginity. In choosing virginity and in keeping it, the ascetic in 'Aphrēm's view not only becomes similar to angels but even superior to them. By way of demonstration he chooses an episode from the evangelist of John resting on the breast of Jesus, a particular act of intimacy and fellowship which allowed him something of which the angels could not dream. His singular interpretation and imagination is supported by the argument which follows: «The angels have received the gift of virginity without effort but you on the contrary as on the basis of battle ...»[6]. In the hymns which have survived in an Armenian version the same theme has been treated with variations[7].

The term *īhīdāyā*[8] in 'Aphrēm does not mean «monk» since monasticism at that time did not have relations with the ecclesiastical community[9]. Therefore an adequate rendering of this term in 'Aphrēm would have to be «solitary» or «ascetic». The figure of the ascetic is that of one who lives in privation. He gives thanks[10], he adores and is deeply absorbed in God, he prays[11], keeps vigils[12], and meditates on the scriptures[13].

[1] *In Genesim et in Exodum commentarii* VI,12, ed. TONNEAU.
[2] *Commentaire*, éd. LELOIR, II,6.
[3] *Carmina Nisibena* I,9, ed. BECK.
[4] *De nativitate* XXVIII,3, ed. BECK.
[5] LELOIR, «La pensée monastique d'Éphrem», p. 113ff.
[6] ܥܝܪ̈ܐ ܕܠܐ ܥܡܠ ܩܒܠܘܗ̇ ܠܒܬܘܠܘܬܐ ܐܢܬ ܕܝܢ ܐܝܟ ܒܩܪܒܐ, *De virginitate* XV,4, ed. BECK, p. 53.
[7] *Hymnes d'Éphrem en version arménienne* II,7ff., éd. MARIÈS-MERCIER, p. 30ff.; cf. IX,65-69, p. 76.
[8] BECK, «Ein Beitrag zur Terminologie des ältesten syrischen Mönchtums», p. 159f.
[9] BECK, *Ephrem der Syrer. Lobgesang aus der Wüste*, p. 22; LELOIR, «Doctrine et méthodes de S. Éphrem», p. 55f.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 55.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 55.
[12] *Ibid.*, p. 56.
[13] *Ibid.*, p. 56.

The life of the ascetic also involves the *fuga mundi*. The term *īhīdāyā* in 'Aphrēm is ambiguous in this respect. On the one hand it means «one who lives alone», on the other hand it embraces the idea of the «solitary» who lives in abandoned places. In the cycle of his hymns *De virginitate*, 'Aphrēm speaks in clear words about the places where the solitaries live. He offers praise to the location of Ephraim «this neighbor of the desert, a companion of loneliness»[14] to which Jesus retired before his final Easter[15]. This Ephraim, «the country near the wilderness», is addressed with the following words: «Blessed are you, for in you the tired Lord rested — the agitated group settled down in your place ... in you he formed a type for the ascetics[16] to live in the all-freeing desert»[17].

In the eyes of 'Aphrēm anchoretism was as the highest form of monastic life. In his efforts to find backing from the gospel traditions for this position his commentary on the Diatessaron provides us very instructive insights. In order to strengthen this tenet, in his commentary, he brings forward an agraphon: «Wherever there is one there I am»[18], a logion which, he says, Jesus said: «In order that no solitary should become sad; Christ, in fact, is himself your joy and he is with us»[19]. Another very interesting comment appears in connection with the episode of the shepherds in the nativity story. Here 'Aphrēm uses the opportunity to employ the angelic message to the shepherds for his particular purpose: «They began with the shepherds (in order) that no one of those who lived in the desert would be frustrated»[20]. Thus the shepherds typologically have been made the first solitaries who received the angelic message.

Very instructive insights come from the Armenian version of his *mēmrē*. Here the Armenian equivalent of the Syriac *īhīdāyā*, *miayn*[21], *miaynawor*[22] and *miaynakeac*[23], connects the idea of virginity with

[14] *Hymnen de Virginitate* XXI, 1, ed. BECK, p. 71.
[15] Cf. John XI, 54.
[16] ܐܒܝ̈ܠܐ *'abīlē*.
[17] ܠܦܘܫܟܝ [ܕܚܝܠ] ܡܢ ܡܪܢ ܠܐܐ [ܘܥܢܐ] ܒܡܫܝܢ ܟܢܫܐ [ܕܘܝܕܐ] ܠܡܘܬܒܐ ܗܘ ܨܪ ܒܟܝ ܠܐܒܝ̈ܠܐ ܕܢܫܪܘܢ ܡܕܒܪܐ ܡܚܪܪ ܟܠ, *ibid.* XXI, 2, p. 71.
[18] *Commentaire*, éd. LELOIR, XIV, 24.
[19] *Ibid.*
[20] *Ibid.*, II, 15.
[21] *միայն*, II, 10, p. 30.
[22] *միայնաւոր*.
[23] *միայնակեաց*.

solitude. Speaking of Elias, Elisha, Jeremiah and John the text reads: «It is in solitude that they have kept (their virginity)»[24]. In the same hymn, the text reads: «Elisha, in the valley, kept himself alone, a solitary»[25]. And again referring to the same Elisha it is said: «On the Carmel being alone, he kept himself as a solitary»[26]. And for the consolation of the ascetics, 'Aphrēm can say that the virtue of virginity is something that belongs to the elect minority[27]; it is a great advantage for a solitary to live in the desert because this favors the virtue of virginity[28].

In the light of these observations, that which is unfolded in the writings of 'Aphrēm is monasticism of a primitive form, namely eremitism, a kind of pre-monasticism.

As one penetrates 'Aphrēm's monastic thought, it becomes clear that the idea of mortification is fundamental to the concept of asceticism in 'Aphrēm. Indeed, it lies at the heart of his whole ascetic outlok. All of 'Aphrēm's arguments stem from this fundamental belief at the core of his teleological structure of asceticism. It is a central truth which remains the same, however much the exposition may vary. In 'Aphrēm, theologumena appear for the purpose of accentuating this cardinal role of mortification.

'Aphrēm uses the concept of suffering[29] and makes it the heart of the Christian life in a special way[30]. At every turn, he comes back to it[31]. The hallmark of the ascetics is suffering. It permeates the whole monastic life and becomes its nature. Its fundamental significance can be seen particularly in those instances where he combines the concept of *'ūlṣānā* «suffering» with the gospel injunctions relevant to his teleology of monasticism, interpreting the ultimate meaning of the Christian life in ascetically oriented terms. In his commentary on the Diatessaron,

[24] II, 4, *ibid.*, p. 30.
[25] II, 24, *ibid.*, p. 32.
[26] II, 10, *ibid.*, p. 30.
[27] *Ibid.*
[28] II, 76-78, *ibid.*, p. 34.
[29] He uses the term *'ūlṣānā* as well as *ḥašā*.
[30] Cf. *Hymni et sermones*, ed. LAMY, III, col. 759, 803, 917; IV, col. 215, 209, 211; *Hymni de virginitate*, ed. RAHMANI II, p. 70f., 75; *Paraenesis* XI, *Opera omnia syriace*, ed. ASSEMANI III, p. 428; this concept has been included even into his testament, *Testament*, éd. DUVAL, p. 264.
[31] *Carmina Nisibena*, ed. BECK.

'Aphrēm offers a locus classicus on this point and it is here that this great theme is brought into sharpest focus: «Jesus died to the world in order that no one should live to the world, and he existed in a crucified body in order that no one should walk sensuously by it. He died to our world in his body in order that he may make (us) alive by his body to his world. And he mortified the life of the body in order that we may not live carnally by the flesh. He was made the master, a teacher not in tribulations of others but by his own suffering. And he himself first tasted bitterness and (thereby) showed us that no one could become his disciple by name but only through suffering»[32]. As is obvious from the preceding text, suffering is interpreted as the most meaningful and the most significant attribute of ascetic practice. Indeed, it is of such primal importance for 'Aphrēm that he uses the same term *'ūlṣānā* in deriving a name for the ascetics[33].

All the imagery which 'Aphrēm presents is enveloped in a very rich symbolism full of age-old themes which have been taken up by him and developed as a source for encouragement and inspiration for the ascetics in order to proceed onward on the arduous road of suffering. The most eminent is the theme of the pearl which is full of suggestiveness. Much celebrated[34] as a symbol of the soul, which according to the cross-currents of gnostic, Mandaean, Manichaean and Iranian legends which were in vogue in Osrhoene at that time, described the soul as imprisoned by the dragon only to be rescued by a celestial being which descended to search for it — it gave assurance of the continual presence of the Lord in the search for his own. One can feel the importance of this theme for 'Aphrēm in the rich variations[35] which appear in his *madrāšē* on the pearl[36].

[32] *Մեռաւ Յիսուս աշխարհի, զի ոք աշխարհի մի կեցցէ. և շրջեցաւ ի մէջ մարմնոց խաչապէս, զի ոք լկտութեամբ մի գնասցէ նովաւ: Մեռաւ աշխարհիս մերոյ մարմնով իւրով, զի կեցուսցէ աշխարհին իւրոյ մարմնով իւրով. և մեռոյց զկեանս մարմնոյ, զի և մեք մարմնով մարմնապէս մի կեցցուք: Եղև նա վարդապետ ուսուցիչ ոչ այլոց նեղութեամբք, այլ անձինն իւրոյ չարչարանաւք. և ինքն յառաջագոյն կանխեաց ճաշակեաց զդառնութիւնս, զի եցոյցմեզ զի մի ոք աշակերտեսցի նմա անուամբք, այլ չարչարանաւք, Srboyn Ep'remi matenagrowt'iwnk'* II, p. 240.

[33] ܐܠܝܨܐ «afflicted», «tormented».

[34] See the hymn of the pearl in the Acts of Thomas, *Apocryphal Acts of the Gospels*, ed. WRIGHT.

[35] GRAFFIN, «Les hymnes sur la perle de Saint Éphrem», p. 129ff.

[36] See a cycle of *madrāšē* on the same subject, in: *Hymnen de Fide*, ed. BECK, p. 248ff.

Certain other aspects in the monastic thought of 'Aphrēm need some elucidation. The armory of 'Aphrēm's imagery and his means for encouragement and inspiration also include higher motivation, something which he tried to instill in his readers. He presents this in affirming the goal of a love for humanity. That is what God demands even from those who live as solitaries in the desert. It is laid down in the idea that the extraordinary and selfless service in asceticism and mortification is something vital for the entire mankind. The hearts of the ascetics must burn for the salvation of the fallen human beings. Life in asceticism and contemplation is intimately related to a concern for the salvation of people. 'Aphrēm finds an illustration to substantiate this in the case of John the Baptist. In his commentary on the Diatessaron, he employs this episode to bring out his argument: «John went into the desert not to become there a savage one but to sweeten in the desert the savagery of the inhabited land; the solitary abandons the world in order to save; he abandons it because of love for it»[37].

With this vital function, there hangs together with it another idea closely related to it — that of the self-sacrifice of the solitaries and their sufferings in place of the church and its institutions. The pneumatic character of the most primitive monastic movement is accepted and respected by 'Aphrēm. Additional observations about this imagery will be made later on.

In connection with these observations about the monastic thought of 'Aphrēm it is very appropriate to offer a comment on 'Aphrēm's own personal example. As to 'Aphrēm's own road of asceticism he looks up to Ja'qōb's second successor on the episcopal see of Nisibis. In Bishop Wālāgeš he found an ideal for his own life. In him he saw the embodiment of his own perfection. 'Aphrēm has devoted an entire hymn eulogizing this spiritual leader[38]. The spiritual qualities which impressed him so profoundly were self-control, mildness, virginity, education and eloquence[39]. That which had a lasting impact upon 'Aphrēm and which captured his entire personality was Wālāges' asceticism combined with his learning. From him did he take over the stimuli for a laborious education of the soul and the spirit, the cultivation of spiritual and intellectual life in the service of the church[40].

[37] VÖÖBUS, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient* II, p. 92ff.

[38] *Carmina Nisibena* XV, ed. BECK.

[39] XV,8, ed. BECK.

[40] VÖÖBUS, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient* II, p. 84ff.

c. *'Aphrēm's Letter to the Mountaineers*

The text which bears the title «A letter of Mār 'Aphrēm to the mountaineers»[1] is a prose text in the form of a letter sent to the solitaries on the mountains. The manuscript tradition does not go farther back than the first quarter of the ninth century[2]. Without doubt it is a document of great importance for every student who wants to delve into the history of ancient Syrian monasticism.

The text of this letter has been edited by Overbeck[3].

The first critical examination of this document was made by Burkitt when he constructed an orderly arrangement of 'Aphrēm's works from the point of view of the quotations taken from the archaic text of the gospels. This letter passed through his examination and its quotations from the Diatessaron brought this letter into the list of the genuine writings of 'Aphrēm[4]. This result appeared to be satisfactory to the scholars[5].

A careful analysis of the text, however, makes it impossible for us to adopt this general opinion about the letter without further scrutiny. It is undeniably true that the later origin of the manuscript is fully compensated for by the quotations fom the gospel used by Tatian. There is no doubt that the quotations given in the letter are, indeed, cited from the Diatessaron. But an examination of the letter has to be carried further than Burkitt's analysis which was interested only in the quotations cited in the text. Such an examination required deeper analysis involving the thoughtworld, imagery, terminology, vocabulary and style. Every avenue which could lead to more information — and no facet is out of place in such an undertaking — had to be explored. Such a scrutiny[6] has been made[7].

A literary critical and historical examination shows us that the initial

[1] ܐܓܪܬܐ ܕܡܪܝ ܐܦܪܝܡ ܠܘܬ ܛܘܪܝܐ.

[2] Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,623 is dated, written in 823 A.D.; the second, Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 17,213 belongs to he 9th cent.; WRIGHT, *Catalogue* II, p. 762ff.

[3] *Opera selecta*, p. 133ff.

[4] *Ephraim's Quotations from the Gospel*, p. 24.

[5] BAUMSTARK, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, p. 38; CHABOT, *Littérature syriaque*, p. 26; it has been briefly mentioned by WRIGHT, *A Short History of Syriac Literature*, p. 35.

[6] VÖÖBUS, *A Letter of Aphrem to the Mountaineers — A Literary-Critical Contribution to Syriac Patristic Literature*.

[7] VÖÖBUS, *Literary-Critical and Historical Studies*, p. 59ff.

division of the letter passes the test of scrutiny. However, the latter part cannot withstand critical attack and must be regarded as an alien body added to the letter, arbitrarily connected with the authentic document[8]. Between the first and the second part of the text of the letter there exists a gulf requiring the strongest of bonds to hold such disparate texts together.

With this letter a very valuable document has come into our possession. That which catches our eye in this precious source is the number of basic features which throw light on 'Aphrēm's monastic thought as well as the scenery of the ascetic movement at that time.

That which has been put into a bright focus in this letter is anchoritism. This movement has spread widely — «you see my brothers, how great an army (lies) on the mountain»[9]. The ascetics on which 'Aphrēm's eyes rested were his fellow ascetics. A record regarding his own solitary life on the mountains of Edessa appears in a source[10] composed not long after the time 'Aphrēm closed his eyes. The persons addressed and spoken of with veneration are characterized as solitaries living on the mountains and in caves. These ascetics are called *ṭūrāyē* «mountaineers». He also used another very remarkable term, namely *pārūšā*[11], usually understood to mean «prudent» but which is employed here in the monastic meaning: «separated one» or as «an anchorite». It is etymologically fully justified.

These ascetics in their activities cultivate individuality, enthusiasm and strict mortification. 'Aphrēm writes that they are completely free from the yoke of the world and the slavery of worldly possessions[12]. The demarcation line between monasticism and the world, between life in loneliness and life in the towns as well as in the villages is very clearly drawn[13]. This is carried out in greater detail when 'Aphrēm uses typology

[8] In the first part the text is addressed to the «brothers mountaineers» and in the speech they are always addressed in the second person plural, but suddenly, *Opera selecta*, ed. OVERBECK, p. 127_{24}, the text changes to the second person singular which is consistently followed throughout the remaining part of the text. Also the character of the content of the last part of the text is totally different.

[9] ܚܙܝܬܘܢ ܐܚܝ ܟܡܐ ܪܒܐ ܡܫܪܝܬܐ ܕܒܛܘܪܐ, *Opera selecta*, ed. OVERBECK, p. 114.

[10] PALLADIOS, *Historia Lausiaca* XL, ed. BUTLER, p. 126f.

[11] ܦܪܘܫܐ, *Opera selecta*, p. $117_{24\text{-}27}$.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. $115_{1\text{-}2}$; $117_{26\text{-}27}$; $118_{13\text{-}14}$.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 124_{14}ff.

in connection with the episode of Lot's wife to illustrate the drastic decision of withdrawing from the world[14].

These ascetics display a very primitive manner of live. They have radically rejected everything that belongs to the conforts of civilization. Everything 'Aphrēm tells us about them radiates the same spirit. He describes these *ṭūrāyē* who live on the mountains, in deserts and in the caves and whose food consisted of grass, with warmth and feeling[15]. They are ascetics who possess nothing, who drink water from the river, who eat roots or fruits of the trees, who clothe themselves with sack-cloth and who go barefoot. They sleep on the ground. He counsels them not to build a dwelling place but to be content with the most primitive of arrangements[16]. Those ascetics who filled the caves, cliffs, hollows and who roamed in the deserts and on the mountains lived as solitaries or anchorites or in small groups who shared their life with animals[17]. They had overcome any fear of the wild beasts. 'Aphrēm's eye rests with deep satisfaction upon those ascetics to whom loneliness was so important that they would not give it up even when circumstances would seem to have made it necessary.

With regard to the motivation of the life of these ascetics, the letter displays a very archaic, almost gnostically infected, idea regarding the grand drama: the whole universe is full of fire, the great conflagration is in process forcing prudent people to flee from the towns and villages which are being consumed by this catastrophe, to hide themselves in mountains and deserts. Jesus himself had given the example[18], namely «a model» for the solitaries to go into the deserts. The sublimity of their status in absolute loneliness is accentuated still more by the awareness that they are «the companions of Elijah and the imitators of John the Baptist»[19]. They are «God's people»[20] and «children of God»[21].

This precious source allows us still deeper insights. The letter emphasizes very strongly that *'ūlṣānā*[22], «suffering», is the earmark of asceticism. Indeed, it is of such primal importance for 'Aphrēm that he uses the same vocable *'ūlṣānā* to derive a meaningful name for the ascetics[23]. 'Aphrēm makes the concept of suffering expressed by *'ūlṣānā* as well as *ḥašā*[24] the heart of the Christian life in his own unique way[25]. At every turn 'Aphrēm comes back to it; it occupies a central position in his thoughtworld. Suffering is the hallmark of the ascetics; it is the very nature of the monastic life.

With respect to the religious activities of the solitaries, 'Aphrēm says that their activity was reduced to prayer and meditation[26].

For the glorification of this form of ascetic life 'Aphrēm opens up important perspectives. He points out that aloofness and absolute loneliness in anchoritism is not really aloofness at all because this life in loneliness is approved by divine providence. This way of life has as its compensation the angelic company. Angels descend upon the dwelling places of the solitaries, sent to be their guides and guardians and to take care of all the duties of the missing earthly companions[27].

Another aspect has to be added. This document reveals the opposition of Christians to the movement of these ascetics and solitaries. They were regarded as outside the Christian church[28]. But, 'Aphrēm decidedly does not share this criticism and takes them under his protection. In his eyes the ascetics held to be outside the church and whose main activity was prayer are declared by 'Aphrēm to be spiritually present whenever the eucharist was celebrated[29]. 'Aphrēm is inventive in finding a proof text in the scriptures in support of this strong position[30].

d. *A* Mēmrā *on the Solitaries and Mourners*

Another very important text from 'Aphrēm bears the title «A *Mēmrā*

14 *Ibid.*, p. 116f.
15 *Ibid.*, p. 111 *et passim.*
16 *Ibid.*, p. 117.
17 *Ibid.*, p. 124f., 126.
18 ܛܘܦܣܐ, τύπος, *ibid.*, p. 114.
19 ܐܝܟ ܠܛܘܪܐ ܚܒܪ̈ܘܗܝ ܕܐܠܝܐ: ܘܐܚ̈ܝܕܝ ܛܘܦܣܗ ܕܝܘܚܢܢ ܡܥܡܕܢܐ, *ibid.*, p. $113_{2\text{-}3}$.
20 ܥܡܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ, *ibid.*, p. 113_{10}.
21 ܒ̈ܢܝܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ, *ibid.*, p. 120.

22 ܥܘܠܨܢܐ, *ibid.*, p. 144.
23 ܥܠܝ̈ܨܐ, «afflicted», «tormented», *ibid.*, p. 121.
24 ܚܫܐ.
25 *Ibid.*, p. 122.
26 *Ibid.*, p. $120_{15\text{-}18}$.
27 *Ibid.*, p. 117.
28 *Ibid.*, p. 121.
29 *Ibid.*, p. 121_5ff.
30 Aphrēm finds that the passage in Job XXXIX, 30 serves as a scriptural proof of this assertion.

on the solitaries and mourners»[1] which was made available by Zingerle[2] and later by Rahmani[3], This document was known much earlier through its Greek version[4]. Here we have to do with a very important record; aside from a few known manuscripts[5], new and important witnesses have been ferreted out of their hiding places in the Syrian Orient[6].

As critical scrutiny[7] has shown, the voice that speaks in this precious document is that of 'Aphrēm[8].

Everything unfolded in this treatise is a eulogy on anchoritism, a eulogy expressed in distinct tones. Here, too, the ascetics are called *iḥīdāyē*, «solitaries», and the term *pārūšē*[9] has also been employed.

'Aphrēm tells us about the motivations for their withdrawal from the world and for their choice of life in the desert. These are brought out at the beginning of the *mēmrā*: they do not want to become contaminated by the sins of the world[10]. They want to find what they cannot find in the world[11]. During their life in the desert the solitaries make the fullest use of the advantages that loneliness offers to them. There is quietness and silence which grant them protection from every disturbance and harm. There they are able to devote themselves to their primary concern which consists in the first place of mourning[12], humility, fasting and holiness[13].

'Aphrēm tells us also about the biblical examples which have inspired these solitaries to undertake their life in loneliness. He particularly

[1] ܡܐܡܪܐ ܕܥܠ ܝܚܝ̈ܕܝܐ ܘܐܒܝ̈ܠܐ.

[2] *Monumenta syriaca* I,4-12. The *incipit* of this *mēmrā* is: ܟܕ ܕܬܕܡܘܪ̈ܬܐ ܪܫܝ.

[3] *Hymni de virginitate* II, p. 81ff.

[4] Sermo alius in patres defunctos, *Opera omnia graece*, ed. ASSEMANI I, p. 175ff. It has been cast into the metrical form, see *Saint Éphrem le Syrien*, éd. ÉMEREAU, p. 40ff.

[5] Ms. Borgia Syr. 10, fol. 46bff. and some other manuscripts, see VÖÖBUS, *Literary-Critical and Historical Studies*, p. 72.

[6] The most important are in the collection in Mardin: Ms. Mardin Orth. 74, fol. 79b-88a; Ms. 140, p. 254-272; Ms. 157, fol. 67b-77b; Ms. 171, p. 40-61; Ms. 418, fol. 167a-178a; Ms. 420, p. 492-497; see VÖÖBUS, *Syriac Manuscripts*.

[7] VÖÖBUS, *Untersuchungen über die Authentizität einiger asketischer Texte*, p. 25ff.

[8] VÖÖBUS, *Literary-Critical and Historical Studies*, p. 72ff.; *Id.*, «Beiträge zur kritischen Sichtung der asketischen Schriften», p. 48ff.

[9] ܦܪܘ̈ܫܐ, *ibid.*, p. 4.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 4_{5-8}.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. $10_{361-376}$.

[12] ܐܒܝܠܘܬܐ.

[13] ܩܕܝܫܘܬܐ.

singles out the actions of Elia and John the Baptist. The evidence drawn from the example of John the Baptist in particular has been put into a solemn setting, namely, cast in a form which has modified the biblical text: «John who was in the desert, is made great in the kingdom»[14].

Interesting additional insights into the phenomenon of the solitaries are offered by 'Aphrēm, placed as they are at the burning focus of his concern. These ascetics live along in the desert[15] but occasionally seek companions so that two or three may live together[16]. The scale of desire for loneliness varies — at the other extreme there are those who have adopted the most drastic rule, namely, to see no man at all[17].

Again 'Aphrēm comes back constantly to the basic hallmark of every true ascetic, namely suffering. 'Aphrēm's sympathy belongs to those «who mortify much their bodies»[18].

'Aphrēm in this *mēmrā* emphatically brings out another very important aspect. The mission of the ascetics in the desert is exalted. He tells the ascetics of their great importance for society. 'Aphrēm emphasizes the value of their prayers which have an immense importance for the rest of the world. Their intercessory prayer sustains the rest of the world: «The inhabited land, in which there is iniquity[19], is being kept through your prayers, and the world which is buried in sins, is being strengthened through your prayers»[20]. This is a favorite thought of 'Aphrēm[21].

'Aphrēm leads the solitaries to the source of encouragement and inspiration pointing to the glory of their life in loneliness. Loneliness is the apex of the presentation around which all deliberations revolve. Even the eternal world takes part in this form of existence. The solitaries belong to the company of angels. They descend to the earth during their struggles and sufferings and they descend to the lifeless remains of those who have died in loneliness. They watch over the earthly remains of these virtuosos who have exchanged life in the world for life in loneliness[22].

[14] ܘܝܘܚܢܢ ܕܗܘܐ ܒܡܕܒܪܐ ܗܘܐ ܪܒܐ ܒܗ ܡܠܟܘܬܐ, *ibid.*, p. 5_{41-42}.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 7_{165}.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. $7_{169-174}$.

[17] ܘܐܝܬ ܕܢܛܝܪܘܬܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܕܒܪ̈ܢܫܐ ܠܐ ܢܚܙܐ, *ibid.*, p. $7_{193-194}$.

[18] ܣܓܝ ܐܠܝܨܝܢ ܦܓܪ̈ܝܗܘܢ, *ibid.*, p. 7.

[19] The variant reading is much better.

[20] ܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܒܗ ܒܨܠܘ̈ܬܗܘܢ ܡܬܢܛܪܐ ܘܥܠܡܐ ܕܛܡܝܪ ܒܚܛ̈ܗܐ ܒܨܠܘ̈ܬܗܘܢ ܡܬܚܝܠ, *ibid.*, p. $12_{475-478}$.

[21] *Carmina Nisibena*, ed. BECK.

[22] It is told here that the angels bury their bodies and keep savage animals away from their earthly remains, *ibid.*, p. $8_{253-338}$.

Much more is unfolded in this precious source. A very archaic stream in the tradition referring to the pneumatic character of ascetics deserves particular interest. It involves the very primitive character of the theology behind the given explanation with regard to the relationship between the anchorites and the church with its cult. That which is brought forward here bears all the marks of very great antiquity. Since it is very instructive, permitting us an insight into the primitive Syrian thoughtworld, it is of much profit to listen to the texts themselves: «Their bodies are the temple[24] of the spirit, their thoughts like the church and their prayer a pure censer and their tears are sweet incense and their groaning and their chants, cheerful hymns are the (eucharistic) offerings»[24]. These insights are deepened by another text: «All day and night, all their work is prayer; instead of a censer which they do not have, their purity is (for) atonement[25] and instead of the buildings of the church they are temples for the Holy Spirit; instead of altars are their spirits; as sacrifices are their prayers offered to the godhead softening Him continually»[26]. Thus everything performed by the ascetics through their self-sacrifice and sufferings in the desert constitutes a full substitution for everything that takes place in the life and activities of the church. It must be noted here that a certain unconcern and naïveté radiated by this text would not be conceivable after measures were taken against the movement of the Messalians[27], measures undertaken by the Patriarch Flavianos (381-404)[28]. After those actions, ideas such as these were completely discredited. However, thoughts like those just quoted are perfectly understandable before the time of Flavianos.

Still more can be envinced from the same source. The very fact that this sort of apology was necessary on the behalf of asceticism, is

[23] ναός.

[24] ܦܓܪܝܗܘܢ ܢܘܣܐ ܕܪܘܚܐ ܘܬܪܥܝܬܗܘܢ ܐܝܟ ܥܕܬܐ ܘܨܠܘܬܗܘܢ ܦܝܪܡܐ ܕܟܝܐ ܘܕܡ̈ܥܝܗܘܢ ܚܠܝܐ ܕܒܣ̈ܡܐ ❖ ܐܝܟ ܩܘܪ̈ܒܢܐ ܬܢܚܬܗܘܢ ܘܩܠܠܗܘܢ ܘܠܐ ܦܨ̈ܝܚܐ, *ibid.*, p. $5_{95\text{-}100}$.

[25] Or: «absolution».

[26] ܐܝܡܡܐ ܘܠܠܝܐ ܟܠܗ ܥܒܕܗܘܢ ܟܠܗ ܨܠܘܬܐ ܚܠܦ ܦܝܪܡܐ ܕܠܝܬ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܕܟܝܘܬܗܘܢ ܗܝ ܬܚܘܣܬܐ ܘܚܠܦ ܒܢܝܢܐ ܕܥܕܬܐ ܗܘܘ ܗܝܟܠܐ ܠܪܘܚ ܩܘܕܫܐ ܚܠܦ ܡܕܒ̈ܚܐ ܪ̈ܘܚܝܗܘܢ ܐܝܟ ܩܘܪ̈ܒܢܐ ܡܬܩܪܒܢ ܨܠܘ̈ܬܗܘܢ ܠܐܠܗܘܬܐ ܡܦܝܣܝܢ ܠܗ ܒܟܠܙܒܢܝܢ, *Monumenta syriaca*, ed. ZINGERLE I, p. $12_{465\text{-}471}$.

[27] VÖÖBUS, Les messaliens et les réformes de Barsauma de Nisibe.

[28] THEODORETOS, *Historia eccl.* IV,11, ed. PARMENTIER, p. 230f.

significant. And here, too, we learn from 'Aphrēm that this matter was his concern and that he used the same argumentation. In this document he pens an important passage in this respect: «Everywhere, where the sacrifice is being offered, they participate, although they are in the desert; and not (as if) because they are far off in body (they are) not members of the church, but (rather that) through their belief they are near»[29].

In the realm of such thoughts we stand at a very archaic point in time in primitive Syrian monasticism. An unmistakable symptom of this is to be found in the conditions which necessitated a fight for the right of existence of pneumatic ideas in asceticism. We learn that these ascetics had to suffer mockery, scoffing and insults from their critics[30]. Such a candid admission deserves our trust, since it is something entirely different from that which later authors concocted. Further, this is quite understandable during the lifetime of 'Aphrēm — at a later time, such phenomena would have been impossible. In this connection it is instructive to remember what Isḥāq of Antioch has to tell us. He describes monasticism at the beginning of the fifth century, bringing forward utterly different complaints. Isḥāq is worried about the degree of veneration which the monks had secured for themselves in society, in which they were enjoying — to use his own words — positions of rulership[31] like the judges of the world[32].

e. *A Cycle of Other Related* Mēmrē

In 'Aphrēm's literary legacy a segment was particularly designed to serve the promotion and furtherance of monastic life. In these *mēmrē* he created his communication lines with contemporary ascetics with whom he was united in a basic understanding of the ascetic vocation and through which he has spoken from generation to generation. And as the manuscript evidence shows, his message was avidly absorbed in the monastic centers and in the cells of the solitaries.

[29] ܐܝܟܐ ܕܡܬܩܪܒ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܡܫܬܘܬܦܝܢ ܐܢܘܢ ܐܦ ܟܕ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܒܚܘܪܒܐ ܘܠܐ ܡܛܠ ܕܪܚܝܩܝܢ ܒܦܓܪ ܠܘ ܒܢܝ̈ ܥܕܬܐ ܐܢܘܢ ܐܠܐ ܒܗܝܡܢܘܬܗܘܢ ܩܪ̈ܝܒܝܢ ܐܢܘܢ, *Opera selecta*, ed. OVERBECK, p. $121_{6\text{-}9}$.

[30] *Monumenta syriaca* I, ed. ZINGERLE, p. $11_{421\text{-}424}$.

[31] This veneration has exceeded that of the priests, *Opera omnia*, ed. BICKELL I, p. 186, cf. p. 188.

[32] *Ibid.*, II, p. 183.

In the first place, we must introduce a *mēmrā* bearing the title[1]: «A *mēmrā* about the solitude of the solitaries and the destitute life of the mourners of the dwellers in the caves on the mountains, in hollows, under rocks and in the cliffs of the ground, and of the roaming ones»[2]. This *mēmrā* qualifies a still another important source[3] stemming from 'Aphrēm[4].

The text of this document has been edited twice, first by Zingerle[5] and then by Rahmani[6].

The few manuscripts which have been known[7] have been supplemented by unknown documents from the treasure chambers in the Syrian Orient[8].

The general pattern of asceticism unfolded in this source is the same featuring solitaries as *īḥīdāyē* and *pārūšē*. The life in loneliness of these ascetics constitutes the main theme also for this *mēmrā*. We are told that those who happen to deviate from their ordinary route and come closer to places of living could hear no talk — as ascetics they lived alone and therefore could hear only weeping[9].

It is conspicuous that the author has chosen his colors of portraiture with great affection to depict these spiritual heroes. The aspects which have been brought out in this eulogy are the same as those which have been already described and need no repetition here. However, additional insights which the source offers about the earmarks of the ascetics, particularly the *'ūlṣānā*, deserve to be singled out.

The fundamental significance of suffering can be seen particularly in those instances where 'Aphrēm combines the concept of *'ūlṣānā* «suffering» with the gospel injunctions relevant to his teleology of asceticism, interpreting the ultimate meaning of the Christian life in

[1] ܡܐܡܪܐ ܕܥܠ ܝܚܝܕܝܘܬܐ ܕܝܚܝܕ̈ܝܐ ܘܡܣܟܢܘܬܐ ܕܐܒ̈ܝܠܐ ܥܡܘܪ̈ܝ ܡܥܪ̈ܐ ܒܛܘܪ̈ܐ، ܘܒܥܘܡ̈ܩܐ ܘܬܚܝܬ ܟܐܦ̈ܐ ܘܒܫܩܝܦܝ̈ܗ ܕܐܪܥܐ ܘܕܗܝܡܢ̈ܐ.

[2] Its *incipit* reads: ܪܒ ܗܘ ܚܝܠܗ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ.

[3] VÖÖBUS, *Untersuchumgen über die Authentizität einiger asketischer Texte*, p. 4ff.

[4] VÖÖBUS, *Literary-Critical and Historical Studies*, p. 69ff.; ID., «Beiträge zur kritischen Sichtung der asketischen Schriften», p. 48ff.

[5] *Sermones duo*, p. 3-28.

[6] *Hymni de virginitate* II, p. 66-80.

[7] Ms. Borgia Syr. 10, fol. 67aff. On some other texts, see VÖÖBUS, *Literary-Critical and Historical Studies*, p. 69.

[8] The most important are in the collection in Mardin: Ms. Mardin Orth. 74, fol. 69a-79a; Ms. 75, p. 194ff.; Ms. 140, p. 201ff.; Ms. 157, fol. 52b-57b; and Ms. 417. See VÖÖBUS, *Syriac Manuscripts*.

[9] *Hymni de virginitate*, ed. RAHMANI II, p. 70.

ascetically oriented terms. This is most clearly demonstrated when 'Aphrēm explains such gospel sayings as Matthew X,38 and parallels by means of the concept of *'ūlṣānā*[10]. The same has taken place with Mark VIII,35 and parallel passages via the same concept[11]. The same thought, namely, that the cost of real discipleship is suffering, is expressed by a different term, *ḥašā*, which replaces the gospel phrase «deny himself»[12].

Another *mēmrā* to be introduced bears the title[13]: «A *mēmrā* about the solitaries, mourners and hermits»[14]. This *mēmrā* raises more questions than the previous ones. The reason is this, that in the manuscript tradition its preservation has been mixed up with a *mēmrā* of Isḥāq of Antioch; further, this confusion must have taken place quite early[15]. As a result, this confusion also appears in the editions. Whereas Assemani[16] and Lamy[17] edited this *mēmrā* among the works of 'Aphrēm, Bedjan has included it in the corpus of the works of Isḥāq of Antioch[18]. A closer examination of the intrinsic evidence, its thoughtworld, terminology, vocabulary and style make it clear that this *mēmrā* wrongly carries the name of Isḥāq of Antioch[19].

Another complication arises from the introduction to the *mēmrā*. There are signs in the manuscript transmission which show that it was not an original part of our *mēmrā*. Closer examination shows that on the one hand there were manuscripts without the first part of the introduction[20]. On the other hand the manuscript tradition also shows that the second part of the introduction appears as a proem for a quite different *mēmrā*[21]. This must have been added arbitrarily because the latter *mēmrā* in other manuscript traditions does not show this[22]. Thus,

[10] *Ibid.*, II, p. 66.

[11] *Ibid.*, II, p. 84; see also *Monumenta syriaca*, ed. ZINGERLE I, p. 7.

[12] *Hymni de virginitate*, ed. RAHMANI II, p. 75.

[13] ܡܐܡܪܐ ܕܥܠ ܝܚܝܕ̈ܝܐ ܘܐܒ̈ܝܠܐ ܘܡܕܒܪ̈ܝܐ.

[14] Its *incipit* reads: ܐܠܗܐ ܕܝܗܒ ܠܛܘܪ̈ܐ.

[15] Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 12,166, fol. 89aff. which has been ascribed to the *mēmrē* of Isḥāq of Antioch, is of the 6th cent.; WRIGHT, *Catalogue* II, p. 674ff.

[16] Sermo XVII, *Opera omnia syriace*, ed. ASSEMANI III, p. 652ff.

[17] *Hymni et sermones* IV, col. 147-185.

[18] *Homiliae* I, p. 49ff.

[19] VÖÖBUS, *Literary-Critical and Historical Studies*, p. 77f.; ID., «Beiträge zur kritischen Sichtug der asketischen Schriften», p. 48ff.

[20] Ms. Borgia Syr. 45, fol. 49b; cf. Ms. Paris Syr. 197, fol. 105aff.

[21] Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 302, fol. 221a; Ms. Vatican Syr. 566, fol. 209b.

[22] Ms. Šarfeh 19/1, fol. 73a; ARMALET, *Catalogue*, p. 178f.

as far as the introduction is concerned, we stand face-to-face with a piece which demands watchfulness.

These manuscripts which have been known[23] have been supplemented by unknown sources from the Syrian Orient as they are a welcome enrichment for our knowledge about the preservation of this text[24].

It is with loving affection that the author unfolds the same phenomena which we have already seen. The *mēmrā*, in general, unfolds the same pattern, but there are variations. Here it is necessary to mention only some aspects.

The interest in mortification underlies the whole discourse. The torture of the body and the killing of the flesh is the tenor that permeates the philosophy of monastic life which is very emphatically presented[25].

Another interesting observation may be added. It is highly interesting that some symptoms of coenobitism begin to appear on the periphery of the ascetic movement in this source[26]. It seems as if the author is concerned about those symptoms which point to some earliest symptoms of a transition from primitive Syrian anchoritism to the settled life of coenobitism.

The next *mēmrā* to the introduced bears the title[27]: «A *mēmrā* on the exhortation of the solitaries»[28]. The text of the *mēmrā* was edited twice, first by Lamy[29] and then by Rahmani[30].

The few manuscripts of this *mēmrā* which were known[31] have been supplemented by unknown manuscript sources from the Syrian Orient[32].

As a closer examination of the intrinsic evidence shows, the credentials of this *mēmrā* are in order[33].

This *mēmrā*, too, appears as a piece which takes its place in the

23 VÖÖBUS, *Literary-Critical and Historical Studies*, p. 75.
24 Ms. Diyarbaker Başaranlar 51, quire 11, fol. 2b-quire 12, fol. 1b; the most important sources are in the collection in Mardin: Ms. Mardin Orth. 74, fol. 19b-32a; Ms. 75; Ms. 143, fol. 95b-118a; Ms. 418, fol. 178a-186b. See VÖÖBUS, *Syriac Manuscripts*.
25 *Hymni et sermones*, ed. LAMY IV, col. 151, 153 *et passim*.
26 *Ibid.*, IV, col. 151.
27 ܡܐܡܪܐ ܕܡܬܥܝܢܘܬܐ ܕܝܚܝ̈ܕܝܐ.
28 Its *incipit* reads: ܐܚ̈ܝ ܩܘܡܘ ܦܘܩܘ ܘܡܪܕܘ.
29 *Hymni et sermones* IV, col. 207-216.
30 *Hymni de virginitate* II, p. 116ff.
31 VÖÖBUS, *Literary-Critical and Historical Studies*, p. 79.
32 Ms. Baghdad Patr. 3122, p. 306-314.
33 VÖÖBUS, *Literary-Critical and Historical Studies*, p. 79f.; ID., «Beiträge zur kritischen Sichtung der asketischen Schriften», p. 48ff.

structure and pattern of the mosaic of the other *mēmrē* of 'Aphrēm which have been reviewed. In this source two features may be singled out for special emphasis in this treatment.

The leading thought which permeates the presentation is the concept of *'ūlṣānā*[34]. It crystallizes the basic tenets[35] described, also using the term *ḥašā*[36]. It is brought out very forcefully that suffering is the force which brings about a transformation in the spiritual being. Another *mēmrā* offers a more ample explanation by saying that suffering transforms the physical being to one like that of an angel[37] and produces God's image in man[38].

The other observation concerns the concept of the cross in the spirituality of asceticism. When 'Aphrēm explains that everyone must be confronted with the cross, he argues that one must mystically attach oneself to the cross in such a way that ascetic practices take the nails and the thorns. Thus through vigils, hunger, thirst and other ascetic practices and means of mortification the body is crucified[39]. From this vantage point, 'Aphrēm can say that the purpose of asceticism is that of seeking the shame of the cross and of carrying the pain of the cross.

Still another point deserves to be mentioned. The *mēmrā* handles the phenomenon of monasticism together with the concept of martyrdom. Ascetics are represented as true martyrs. While martyrs endure hunger, thirst, pain, scourge, fire and sword, ascetics offer self-sacrifice as the result of vigils, ascetic acts and means of mortification[40]. The thought that asceticism is a new form of martyrdom is another way in which 'Aphrēm expresses the teleology of asceticism. This significant line of thought, which has received repeated treatment, is developed to show that monasticism is a transformation of martyrdom. For just as the martyrs were ready for bodily ordeals, torture and destruction, so are the monks ready to accomplish the same through mortification[41]. The

34 ܐܘܠܨܢܐ.
35 *Hymni et sermones*, ed. LAMY IV, p. $215_{1\text{-}2,\,6,\,8}$; 209_{4}; 211_{14}; 215_{7}.
36 ܚܫܐ.
37 *Ibid.*, col. 217.
38 *Ibid.*, col. 219.
39 *Ibid.*, col. 213.
40 *Ibid.*, col. 215.
41 *Ibid.*, col. 213, 215; see also *Carmen adhortatorium ad monachos*, ed. RAHMANI, p. 11. Very interesting insights offers also a text in *Opera omnia graece*, ed. ASSEMANI II, p. 330. This text shows traces that it has been translated from its original in Syriac.

quintessence of both phenomena is, or becomes, identical. When expounding these thoughts, ʾAphrēm does not only offer general ideas but is very specific even to concrete elements in the analogy. He emphasizes the fact that the ascetics are to apply to themselves the pains of the martyrs by ascetic acts so that the members of their bodies become martyrs: «Your members are martyrs of hiddenness which along with martyrs are worthy of their suffering»[42].

f. *An Unknown* Mēmrā *on the Solitaries*

Finally this cycle of texts can be supplemented by an unedited text[1]. The best witness is to be found in Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 302[2] bearing the title: «A *mēmrā* of Mār ʾAphrēm about the solitaries, the mourners and the dwellers in the wilderness and on the desolated mountains»[3]. Certain other manuscripts have preserved the same source[4]. However, all these manuscripts do not offer the same incipit[5].

The pattern of the ascetic thoughtworld unfolded in general is the same as in the preceding sources, this *mēmrā* being closest in particular to the first in this cycle. Thus the already discussed features do not need to be repeated here. However, there are some new insights which make this source very welcome.

One concerns its insight into the scenery on the mountains of Edessa and in the desert areas in its surroundings and elsewhere. Our source gives the following glimpse of the movement of the ascetics: «One labors alone — in the wilderness there is a great company; others who labor on the rocks — there are multitudes and thousands (of them); the third (are those) who gather together by fours among themselves, six and seven, if they wish — twelve in groups they gather together»[6]. The remarkable

[42] ܗܕܡܐ ܠܡܣܝܒܪܢܘܬܟ ܐܢܘܢ. ܐܝܬ ܗܘ ܣܗܕܘܬܐ ܕܟܣܝܘܬܐ: ܕܥܡ ܣܗܕܐ ܫܘܝܢ ܚܫܝܗܘܢ, *Hymni et sermones*, ed. LAMY IV, col. 215.

[1] VÖÖBUS, «Ein neuer Text von Ephraem über das Mönchtum», p. 41ff.

[2] Fol. 221a-224b.

[3] ܡܐܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝ ܐܦܪܝܡ: ܥܠ ܝܚܝܕܝܐ ܘܐܒܝܠܐ: ܘܥܡܘܪܝ ܒܡܕܒܪܐ: ܘܒܛܘܪܐ ܚܪܝܒܐ.

[4] Ms. Vatican Syr. 566, fol. 209b-215a; this is a young codex, VAN LANTSCHOOT, *Inventaire*, p. 91ff; Ms. Šarfeh 19/1, fol. 73a-87a, ARMALET, *Catalogue*, p. 178f.

[5] Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 302 has a proemium, also Ms. Vatican Syr. 566, which appears also in another *mēmrē*, *Hymni et sermones*, ed. LAMY IV, col. 147f.

[6] ܚܕ ܕܡܫܡܫ ܠܒܠܚܘܕܘܗܝ، ܒܗ ܒܚܘܪܒܐ ܟܢܫܐ ܗܘ ܪܒܐ. ܐܚܪܢܐ ܕܡܫܡܫܝܢ

point, however, is this, that the interest of the author belongs entirely to those who live alone. Only the solitaries are placed into the flaming focus of his loving concern. He never speaks about other groups and the ways of life characteristic of them. The terrain is familiar to us from ʿAphrēm's other *mēmrē*[7].

Furthermore, this picture is framed by scenes which allow us instructive glimpses into the life of these ascetics. They lived in the caverns and on the rocks and in the wilderness[8]. They were roaming from place to place[9] so that even in the wilderness they had no permanent place[10]. For nourishment they found herbs, roots and grass like animals[11]. In appearance they were dirty, wild, disfigured, owing to their severe fasting and their rigorous life in privation[12]. In kaleidoscopic variations of metaphors, often over-ornate, their life is compared with the life of animals[13] and birds[14] whose life they share in nature.

Among the additional insights, one is particularly significant. There is one other aspect of suffering as an all-penetrating concept which was not covered by the preceding sources. This concerns introspection as a spiritual form of mortification. This phenomenon is a sort of psychical mortification developed by the avenue of introspection and intended to cultivate anguish and pain. This phenomenon, in fact, opens another perspective by which to understand the all-pervading significance of mortification.

The grave and painful thoughts of sin, death and punishment determine all of their sentiments so that only one disposition is able to conform to this spiritual atmosphere — namely sadness, mourning, grief

ܒܟܐܦܐ. ܪܒܘܬܐ ܘܐܠܦܐ ܬܡܢ. ܬܠܝܬܝܐ ܕܟܢܫܝܢ ܐܪܒܥܐ. ܒܝܢܬ ܢܦܫܗܘܢ. ܫܬܐ ܘܫܒܥܐ ܐܢ ܨܒܝܢ. ܬܪܥܣܪ ܒܟܢܘܫܝܐ ܟܢܫܝܢ, Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 302, fol. 223a.

[7] *Monumenta syriaca*, ed. ZINGERLE I, p. 7f.

[8] Fol. 221a-221b.

[9] Fol. 223b.

[10] «Wherever they have evening, there (is) the *bēt mešrītā* (resting place) to them», fol. 223a.

[11] ܗܐ ܪܥܝܢ ܐܝܟ ܚܝܘܬܐ. ܐܟܠܝܢ ܦܐܪܐ ܐܘ ܥܣܒܐ, «behold their graze like animals, (eat fruits) or plants (between the mountains)», fol. 222b.

[12] Fol. 221a-221b.

[13] «They mix themselves with the animals», «they mix themselves every moment with the stag», «they leap with young roes», fol. 222b.

[14] «Like doves they shelter themselves in the rocks», «like eagles on the mountain peaks».

and affliction. 'Aphrēm assures them that this sorrow is the sign of perfection in the Christian life. But by this sign, 'Aphrēm does not wish to understand a merely psychological disposition without any concrete outward physical phenomena. On the contrary, his supposition is that the fright at the thought of eternal punishment must be so intense that the heart is pierced with utter vehemence so much so that the inner pain and affliction must find its outlet in tears. Sadness and mourning are inseparately connected with weeping.

In connection with this phenomenon it is appropriate to remember that in the Syriac vita, in one of its recensions, which contains a brief paragraph about 'Aphrēm's manners and habits, mixed together with some about his prosopographic features, there is also included this particular feature: «His countenance was always mournful and never did he yield to laughter»[15].

It is understandable, 'Aphrēm concludes, that such an exalted disposition, this living in constant tension must be ear-marked by a commensurate character of life. This mood leaves no room ever for the most harmless of joys and gay spirits. 'Aphrēm extirpates every kind of joking mood, every gay and joyful disposition[16]. The most harmless recreation falls under his condemnation. He is particularly vehement against laughter. Repeatedly, he points out that Jesus in his life on earth never laughed but wept. He warns the monks that laughter as soon as it breaks through must be understood as an unmistakable symptom that evil has entered the soul and is working to destroy that blessedness of salvation promised only to those who are sad. An ancient Arabic translation has preserved a special homily on the subject of laughter where 'Aphrēm makes the danger clear in the plainest of words. There laughter is «the beginning of destruction of soul; o, monk, when you notice something of that, know that you have arrived at the depth of the evil. Then do not cease to pray God, that He might rescue you from this death ... Laughter expells the virtues and pushes aside the thoughts on death and meditation on the punishment. O, Lord, banish from me laughter and give me weeping and lamenting, which Thou demandest from me»[17].

[15] *Hymni et sermones*, ed. LAMY II, col. 41ff. New sources have emerged about his story. The most important sources are in the collection in Mardin: Ms. Mardin Orth. 256, p. 309-338; Ms. 260, nr. 2 in the collection; Ms. 261, p. 261-317; Ms. 272, p. 14-70. See VÖÖBUS, *Syriac Manuscripts*.

[16] Ms. Sin. Georg. 36, fol. 136aff. Laughter and hilarity are considered as the best way to perdition.

[17] اول خراب نفس الراهب هو الضحك والبريسيا. ايه الراهب اذا انت ابصرت نفسك فى شى من هذا فاعلم انك قد صرت الي غمق الشر. فلا تزال تطلب من الله وتتضرع اليه حتي يخلصك من هذا الموت ... الضحك يطرد الصلاح ويذهب بذكر الموت والتفكر بالعذاب . يا رب اطرد عني الضحك وهب لي النوح والبكا الذي تطلب مني, *Die griechische Ephraem-Paraenesis gegen das Lachen in arabischer Übersetzung*, ed. HEFFENING, p. 106.

With special fervor does 'Aphrēm speak of tears and weeping[18]. He does not regard weeping as a temporary and casual phenomenon. He expects that the psychological atmosphere created by continuous fear and dread, methodically cultivated, produces tears continually. 'Aphrēm has summarized this in his prayer: «Give me pain, which cannot be consoled away, and a heart upon which there is an ache, and a source which streams and does not cease»[19]. The tradition about 'Aphrēm says that weeping was as natural to him as breathing to others[20]. 'Aphrēm himself confesses that this was not taken from the air[21]. He says that whenever he thinks of the hour of the final judgement, when the Bridegroom will come, and when he will be cast into darkness, tears begin to flow from his eyes[22]. In these moments, when fear paralyzes him[23], he weeps until he is exhausted and has no strength to weep any longer[24].

It is with the highest terms that 'Aphrēm speaks of these products of sorrow, grief and pain. In his eyes these actions accompanied by repentant cries are the real jewels[25]. His advice is: «Pour tears in prayer, and purify the body from guilt»[26]. He even goes so far as to say that he regards such weeping as expiatory[27], as baptism of a sort[28].

Finally, we must pause for a moment to look at another significant aspect. This *mēmrā*, too, is concerned with the repudiation of claims that the ascetics and solitaries were not members of the church but stand

[18] Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 302, fol. 221b.

[19] ܗܒ ܠܝ ܚܫܐ ܕܠܐ ܒܘܝܐ. ܘܠܒܐ ܕܥܠܘܗܝ ܟܘܪܗܢܐ ܘܡܒܘܥܐ ܕܪܕܐ ܘܠܐ ܫܠܐ, *Sermones duo*, ed. ZINGERLE, p. 15, col. 2.

[20] *Vita atque encomium*, ed. MIGNE, col. 829.

[21] Ms. Birmingham Ming. Syr. 190, fol. 127a.

[22] Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 17,172, fol.282b.

[23] In another *mēmrā* 'Aphrēm says: «Pains surround me from all sides; sorrow hence is close to me; and grief and pain name me; also sufferings terrify me, great weeping is on me — alas for me», Ms. Birm. Mingana Syr. 190, fol. 127a.

[24] *Opera omnia*, ed. ASSEMANI I, p. 53.

[25] *Monumenta syriaca*, ed. ZINGERLE I, p. 6.

[26] *Hymni et sermones*, ed. LAMY IV, col. 209.

[27] ܗܒܝܢ ܠܗܘܢ ܡܕܝܡ ܟܠܥܕ ܚܘܣܝܐ ܡܢ ܕܡܥܝܗܘܢ, «always they give to themselves atonement (absolution) from their tears», Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 302, fol. 222a.

[28] In the *madrāšē* about Abraham Qīdūnayā 'Aphrēm develops the same thought and calls the eyes as sources of expiation, reckoning with «two baptisms of expiation», *Hymni et sermones*, ed. LAMY III, col. 771, 773.

outside. Among other passages, the following locus is perhaps the most characteristic: «They serve as priests for themselves and they celebrate (offer) their sufferings, always they give to themselves absolution from the tears; their fastings are their eucharists and their vigils their libations, their prayers their assistants[29]; their faith is a sanctuary, their minds are altars, their virginity the perfect sacrifice, their chastity a veil (of the altar or the sanctuary) and their humility a censer of incense»[30].

Again, we are taken into a very early epoch, thanks to these glimpses[31]. The way in which these criticisms and objections were answered is of special interest for our inquiry. This is of particular importance — first, because the arguments are very archaic and second, because they have not yet been brought into disrepute. The monastic life makes solitaries and anchorites not only members of the church, but actually priests, the «priests of secrecy»[32] as one manuscript reads[32], or «spiritual priests»[33] as the reading appears in another manuscript tradition[33]. The openness and candor with which this argument is used must belong not only to a very early period but actually to 'Aphrēm's concern as he himself shows in his letter to the mountaineers[34] and in other *mēmrē*[35].

4. The Fifty Spiritual Homilies

a. *The Source*

Like any another unconventional piece[1] of early Christian literature, the corpus known as the Spiritual Homilies of Macarios has excited

[29] Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 302, fol. 222a is defective in this place in which this passage is missing.

[30] ܟܗܢܝܢ ܟܗ̈ܢܐ ܠܢܦܫܗܘܢ ܘܡܩܪܒܝܢ ܐܘܠ̈ܨܢܝܗܘܢ ܗܘ ܠܗܘܢ ܡܫܪܝܢ ܟܠܥܕܢ ܫܘܒܩܢܐ ܡܢ ܕ̈ܡܥܐ ܨܘ̈ܡܝܗܘܢ ܐܘܟܪ̈ܣܛܝܗܘܢ ܘܫ̈ܗܪܝܗܘܢ ܢܘ̈ܣܟܝܗܘܢ ܘܨܠ̈ܘܬܗܘܢ ܫ̈ܡܫܝܗܘܢ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܗܘܢ ܒܝܬ ܩܘܕܫܐ ܘܡܕ̈ܒܚܐ ܪ̈ܥܝܢܝܗܘܢ ܒܬܘܠܘܬܗܘܢ ܕܒܚܬܐ ܓܡܝܪܬܐ ܢܟܦܘܬܗܘܢ ܐܦܐܪܐ ܘܡܟܝܟܘܬܗܘܢ ܦܝܪܡܐ ܕܒܣ̈ܡܐ, Ms. Šarfeh 19/1, fol. 79a-79b.

[31] VÖÖBUS, *Untersuchungen über die Authentizität einiger asketischer Texte*, p. 1f.

[32] ܟܗ̈ܢܐ ܕܟܣܝܘܬܐ, Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 302, fol. 222a.

[33] ܟܗ̈ܢܐ ܪܘܚܢܐ, Ms. Šarfeh 19/1, fol. 80a.

[34] *Opera selecta*, ed. OVERBECK, p. 120f.

[35] *Monumenta syriaca*, ed. ZINGERLE I, p. 11; *Hymni et sermones*, ed. LAMY IV, p. 163; cf. *Opera omnia syriace*, ed. ASSEMANI III, p. 650.

[1] *Die 50 geistlichen Homilien*, ed. DÖRRIES-KLOSTERMANN-KROEGER.

prolonged, if sporadic, scholarly discussion about its origin, background and sources: This is a source whose extent has but slowly and gradually been unfolded. When Villecourt discovered in them elements of the Messalian Asceticon, that John of Damascus had recognized certain theses as Messalian[2], it was proven at once that the Spiritual Homilies ascribed to Macarios could not be from the hand of the famous monk Macarios in Scete, but from sources related to the movement of the Messalians. This discovery imparted a new stimulus and direction to research[3].

The systematic search for new materials began to widen the scope. It gradually became apparent that the fifty Spiritual Homilies represented only one collection in an extensive corpus. A work on one collection of homilies translated into Arabic[4] created important premises for further advancement[5], for this tradition in the Arabic version was of particular importance because it included writings absent in the Greek tradition. The same Arabic version is also significant in that it helps one to illumine the question of authorship — the name Simon is introduced here[6]. The same name, it should be noted, had already appeared in the Opuscula[7]; it also appears in the appendix added to the homilies[8] and in a homily which circulated independently[9], according to which the author was Simon of Mesopotamia.

Scholarly discussion on the Pseudo-Macarian corpus entered a new phase in the year 1941 with the appearance of the work of Dörries. Indeed, this work constitutes a landmark in this area of historical research. It brought to light hitherto unknown texts from Greek, Arabic and Syriac sources[10]. Many of the newly found homilies and other texts coincided in part with the known collection of the homilies, but others were previously unknown. Dörries, taking the collection in Arabic[11] to be the most archaic layer, identified a number of collections in their

[2] «La date et l'origine des 'Homélies spirituelles'».

[3] *Macarii Anecdota. Seven Unpublished Homilies*, ed. MARRIOTT.

[4] Cf. VILLECOURT, «Homélies spirituelles de Macaire en arabe», p. 337ff.

[5] STROTHMANN, *Die arabische Makariustradition.*

[6] So in Ms. Paris Arab. 149; Ms. Vatican Arab. 70 and Ms. Vatican Syr. 80.

[7] PG XXXIV, ed. MIGNE, col. 821ff. The addition: «Metaphrastes» is certainly a later addition to the name. Cf. TREU, «Zu einer Kiewer Handschrift der Opuscula», p. 294ff.

[8] *Macarii Anecdota*, ed. MARRIOTT.

[9] Hom. XXII in Ms. Vat. Greek 1997, fol. 176, ed. MAI, *Nova Patrum Bibliotheca* VIII,3, p. 1. See also STROTHMANN, *Die arabische Makariostradition*, p. 27ff.

[10] *Symeon von Mesopotamien.*

[11] Ms. Vatican Arab. 70 and Ms. Vatican Arab. 80.

different forms[12]. He held the work to be Messalian in character and that the collection in the Arabic tongue stood closest to the original character of the work. As has already been mentioned, the name Simon came up in this tradition. Dörries identified Simon with the leader of the Messalian movement as recorded in Theodoretos[13] and calls him Simon of Mesopotamia. Dörries also made an effort to reconstruct the Messalian Asceticon. To this end, he focussed in particular upon the sections consisting of questions and answers. In this connection, Dörries concurred with Villecourt's judgment. Accordingly, Dörries called the Spiritual Homilies «Katechismus der Messalianer, ihr Asketikon». Given the assumption of a Mesopotamian setting[14] for the homilies, the ascetic group and its holy book was thereby identified, together with its leader as Simon of Mesopotamia.

New impulses energized research. As a result, new collections of materials in Greek[15], Arabic and Syriac were brought to light. As it happens, the Syriac tradition[16] was the most venerable, given its great age. The oldest witness was written in the year 534[17]. One source[18], certainly ancient, represents the only independent collection, which has been assumed[19] in its original form to come closest to the Asceticon[20]. It also must be said that the Syriac tradition has a greater number of witnesses than any other oriental tradition. Further, Syriac tradition has also absorbed certain other texts[21]. We are very fortunate that unknown sources, reposing in hiding places in the Syrian Orient, have been brought to light.

[12] *Symeon von Mesopotamien*, p. 145.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 145.

[14] Marriott, among others, has listed two items of evidence for the Mesopotamian provenance of the spiritual homilies: the allusions to wars between the Romans and the Persians fought throughout the first four centuries A.D. on Syrian territory. The second is the reference to prostitution. «His home was a hunting ground for the trade in white slaves».

[15] *Neue Homilien des Makarios/Symeon*, ed. KLOSTERMANN-BERTHOLD.

[16] *Die syrische Überlieferung der Schriften des Makarios I: Syrischer Text*, ed. STROTHMANN.

[17] Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 12,175, WRIGHT, *Catalogue* II, p. 633ff.

[18] Ms. Sinai Syr. 14, SMITH LEWIS, *Catalogue*, p. 17.

[19] DÖRRIES, *Symeon von Mesopotamien*, p. 9ff.

[20] STROTHMANN, *Makarios und die Makariosschriften*, p. 97f.

[21] Writings under the name of Makarios of Alexandria and those of Makarios the Egyptian.

b. *Its Syriac Provenance*

In this area of research, my own studies led me long ago[1] to another plateau, one which opened up very different vistas. Certain phenomena in the Spiritual Homilies had aroused my suspicion and they were of such a nature that a closer examination of this very peculiar source was warranted[2]. The phenomena which attracted attention put me face-to-face with matter not privy to the Greek tradition but which was clearly of Syrian provenance.

First of all, one cannot help but notice that the way in which the Spiritual Homilies speak of the Holy Spirit is most revealing. The Holy Spirit for the author is a Mother[3]. She takes her children into her arms and gives them the breast[4]. This imagery graphically depicts the experience of inspiration as a source of spiritual growth. When one thinks of the understanding of the Trinity in Greek theology, such a view appears totally out of place in a Greek document. However, such an idea is completely at home in the Semitic Orient where the archaic idea of the feminine character of the Spirit was so strong that it could only be forced to retreat — under pressure. It suffices here to mention but one passage in Aphrahat: «As long as a man takes no wife, he honors and loves God, his Father, and the Holy Spirit, his Mother, and he has no other love»[5]. It is unmistakably clear that terminology of this sort in the Spiritual Homilies draws heavily upon premises deeply rooted in ancient Syrian Christianity.

Among other such phenomena in terminology, one deserves particular attention. It is a term employed in the Spiritual Homilies for the monastic communities, namely ἀδελφότης[6]. This term is unusual in Greek literature but one which was very popular in Syriac[7]. It also must

[1] This study had been lying on my desk far too long awaiting publication. It was ready as long ago as July of 1959 when I had the opportunity at S. Gerolamo on the Janiculum hill in Rome to share my new findings with the late J. Gribomont, namely that I had found new avenues to elucidate the question of the provenance of the spiritual homilies, but particularly the evidence in the archaic biblical texts used by the homilies. Since that time, I have kept Prof. Quispel, with whom I shared the same interest in this literature, informed of my new approach.

[2] VÖÖBUS, *On the Historical Importance of the Legacy of Pseudo-Macarios*, p. 11ff.

[3] ... τὴν ἐπουράνιον μητέρα, τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, Neue Homilien XXVII, 4, ed. KLOSTERMANN-BERTHOLD, p. 155.

[4] *Ibid.*, XXVII, 3, p. 154.

[5] *Demonstrationes* XVIII, 10, ed. PARISOT I, 1, col. 840. See also page 21.

[6] *Epistula magna*, p. 258, 271, 283.

[7] About the negative reaction against this term by Gregory of Nyssa, see page 60.

be added that certain phrases are transparently odd renderings of the Syriac. The phrase: περί δε τῆς συναγωγῆς καὶ τῆς ἱερᾶς συγκροτήσεως τῶν μοναστηρίων τῆς ἀδελφότητος[8] serves as a good illustration. It is very unusual in Greek, even clumsy, but altogether normal and perfect in Syriac[9].

The ascetic practices displayed in the homilies exhibit peculiar features which are not in line with Greek monastic practice. That which is said about these activities, namely their vigils, cultivation of distress, affliction, mourning[10], their wailing and weeping[11], is singular. These features fit into a pattern, a mosaic whose ascetic physiognomy in every respect is Syrian in provenance. As opposed as that may be to the monastic way of life in the Greek tradition[12], it is in full accord with everything that the passionate psyche of the Syrians put into an indigenous form of asceticism suited to their own needs[13].

These insights gain force when the inquiry is extended to ascetic hermeneutics, namely, to the interpretation of scriptural passages in support of that ascetic thoughtworld. Involved are a cluster of biblical logia, the most important of which have been awaiting introduction, at the very substructure of ascetic theology. The most revealing is the logion on taking up the cross in Matth. XVI,24 which appears in the Spiritual Homilies in a form[14] in which it is combined with new and explanatory elements: μετὰ χαρᾶς καὶ ἀγαλλιάσεως[15]. That such a combination fits in the Syrian traditions is demonstrated by the Syriac Didascalia, a very important ancient Christian document[16]. We have now more ample evidence in this regard in the new manuscript sources discovered recently[17]. The various ways in which segments of the verse have been

[8] *Epistula magna*, p. 256,6.

[9] ܥܠ ܟܢܘܫܬܐ ܘܟܢܘܫܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܕܝܪ̈ܝܬܐ ܕܐܚܘܬܐ.

[10] Καὶ ὡς τὸν σταυρὸν ὄντως βαστάζων ἐν ἀγῶνι καὶ πόνῳ καὶ πένθει καὶ θλίψει διὰ τὴν βασιλείαν ἀδιαλείπτως ἤτω, *Epistula magna*, p. 273.

[11] *Die 50 geistlichen Homilien* I,12; XI,14, ed. DÖRRIES-KLOSTERMANN-KROEGER, p. 12f., 105 *et passim*.

[12] VÖÖBUS, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient* II, p. 292ff.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 298ff.

[14] ... τὸν σταυρὸν καθ' ἡμέραν αἴροντες μετὰ χαρᾶς καὶ ἀγαλλιάσεως καὶ ἀκολουθοῦντες αὐτῷ, *Epistula magna*, p. 254.

[15] Cf. ἐξακολουθοῦσα τὸν σταυρὸν τοῦ Κυρίου αἴρειν μετὰ χαρᾶς, *Neue Homilien*, p. 43; ... ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καθ' ἡμέραν χαίρων καὶ ἀκολουθείτω μοι, *Die 50 geistlichen Homilien*, p. 52.

[16] ܘܟܠ ܕܠܐ ܫܩܠ ܨܠܝܒܗ ܒܚܕܘܬܐ ܘܐܬܐ ܒܬܪܝ، ܠܐ ܫܘܐ ܠܝ, *The Didascalia Apostolorum in Syriac*, ed. VÖÖBUS II, p. 189.

[17] VÖÖBUS, *On the Historical Importance of the Legacy of Pseudo-Macarios*, p. 17f.

combined and clauses added show just how much the ascetics concentrated upon it. Indeed, this logion stood at the center of thought in the circles of Mesopotamian ascetics. The scriptural evidence, too, is expressed in a singular way, a way which is as suggestive in its richness as it is unequivocal as evidence of Syriac origin.

One term for Christ which frequently flows through the pen of the author of the Spiritual Homilies is that of the «Bridegroom», the one to whom the ascetics are to tender their allegiance[18]. This idea, with all of its implications, is put into proper perspective in the conclusion of the parable of Ten Virgins when the Bridegroom, with the wise virgins, proceeds to the celebration. That which is unfolded before our eyes is most revealing, involving several facts important for our inquiry. Before us lie exactly the same phenomena as those which appear in another Greek text[19], the peculiarities of which only make sense when it is recognized that it is a translation of a lost Syriac original[20]. Thus there are reasons for becoming particularly attentive, as the evidence pointing to Syriac provenance gains cumulative weight.

The earliest Syriac sources reveal just how popular the epithet «Bridegroom» for Christ actually was. We come across formulations which leave us with the impression that they stem from very ancient creedal formulations. It must be said that the role played by this term in Syrian usage is very conspicuous; the role of this theologumenon becomes understandable only after one has penetrated the real sources of it. Just how strongly this Syriac idiosyncrasy exhibits its character and force is made manifest in the translation literature where the Greek and the Syriac genius meet and each goes its own way[21].

Even more of a surprise is waiting in the wings. This has to do with the archaic Syrian faith which clings to the conviction that Christ, the true Bridegroom, came for the purpose of gathering and leading only those

[18] *Die 50 geistlichen Homilien* IV,6.14; X,4; XV,2 etc., p. 31, 37, 95, 127 etc.

[19] «Une curieuse homélie grecque inédite sur la virginité», éd. AMAND-MOONS, p. 35ff.

[20] VÖÖBUS, «Syrische Herkunft der Pseudo-Basilianischen Homilie über die Jungfräulichkeit», p. 69ff.

[21] A good illustration is offered by the Idiomela of Kosmas and their Syriac translation Μηναῖον II (Venice 1612), p. 14 reads: καὶ ὑπόδεξαι τὸν βασιλέα χριστόν. But the Syriac version of the same text had to be made palatable to Syriac taste by adding the term «bridegroom»: ܚܦܘ ܐܦܪܘܣܗ ܘܩܒܠܘܗܝ، ܠܡܠܟܐ ܚܬܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ, as is found in a Menaion of the Melkite rite, Ms. Vatican Syr. 342, fol. 21b.

who followed his call under the vow of virginity. This idea has been crystallized in a logion in the Gospel of Thomas[22], namely, that the virgins who went with the Bridegroom to the celebration are solitaries, thus applying this promise only to those Christians who follow the call to abandon marriage, possessions and the world with all of its demands. Just how deeply this idea is rooted in the ancient Syrian traditions can be seen in the records[23]. The parable with this interpretement must have become particularly important for ancient Mesopotamian Christianity[24], speaking as it does of a separation which takes place among those who give heed to the Christian message — a separation whose *Sitz im Leben* is manifested in a very archaic piece of baptismal liturgy in Mesopotamian Christianity[25].

The measure of surprise in not yet full. There is something else, something which will crown all our findings. Even the terminology is telling in this instance. Whereas the parable tells us that the wise virgins who were ready went to the γάμους, the marriage feast, the Spiritual Homilies instead read that they entered the νυμφών, the bridal chamber[26]. The Spiritual Homilies thus reveal what they really are — homilies coming from a Syrian background and using a distinctive Syrian rendering[27]. Just what this deviation, which has replaced the Greek term which is the plural and has no local meaning, really represents, cannot be learned from the Old Syrian witnesses — Syr. Sin. and Syr. Cur. are missing here — but it can be discovered from the text used by 'Aphrēm[28], 'Aphrahaṭ[29] and many other sources[30]. It is a rendering which has even been memorialized in an inscription[31]. It has even found a home in liturgical sources[32] and, as an Old Syriac reading,

[22] Logion 75: «Jesus said: many are standing at the door, but the solitaries (μόναχος) are the ones who will enter the bridal chamber», *The Gospel of Thomas*, ed. GUILLAUMONT-PUECH-QUISPEL-TILL-YASSAH 'ABD AL-MASIḤ, p. 40f.

[23] VÖÖBUS, *Celibacy, A Requirement for Admission to Baptism*, p. 1ff.

[24] *The Acts of Thomas*, ed. WRIGHT, p. 182.

[25] VÖÖBUS, *Celibacy, A Requirement for Admission to Baptism*, p. 49ff.

[26] *Epistula magna*, p. 275.

[27] VÖÖBUS, *On the Historical Importance of the Legacy of Pseudo-Macarios*, p. 23.

[28] *Hymni et sermones*, ed. LAMY IV, col. 207, 209.

[29] *Demonstrationes* VI,1; IX,4, XIV,16, col. 240, 248, 416, 612.

[30] VÖÖBUS, *Studies in the History of the Gospel Text in Syriac* I, p. 111; cf. p. 92, 101.

[31] GUIDI, «Di un' iscrizione sepolcrale siriaca», p. 76.

[32] Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,493, fol. 102a, WRIGHT, *Catalogue* I, p. 219ff.; Ms. Vatican Syr. 117, fol. 453b, ASSEMANI,*Catalogus* III, p. 36; see also an official formula for address, in Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,636, fol. 58a, WRIGHT, *Catalogue* II, p. 101a.

has been carried over into the Palestinian Syriac[33] as well as the Old Armenian version[34].

Fortunately, we do not need to stop here. In addition to very instructive observations on this, further evidence which is able to open up a new vista has been discovered. It becomes evident when the biblical text employed in the Spiritual Homilies is scrutinized. These findings advance our investigation[35]. Extensive research on the archaic tradition of the biblical text in ancient Syrian Christianity leads us to phenomena which previously had not been noticed. The text of the Bible reveals readings which were at home in the ancient Syrian textual traditions. This is so, not only with regard to the text of the gospels and the epistles, but also the Old Testament[36]. It reveals the physiognomy of a Vetus Syra.

Confronted with such a state of affairs, only one conclusion is possible. Since the Spiritual Homilies did not use the Greek Bible but the Bible in the form of the Vetus Syra, we have firm evidence of the Syrian provenance of this legacy.

In conclusion, from whatever angle we proceed, whether from that of the physiognomy of asceticism, or the basic premises, or special notions and concepts or the scriptural support with its particular hermeneutics — there is presented to us the life and thought so deeply embedded in the ancient Mesopotamian traditions[37]. Accordingly, the church historical significance of the corpus of the Spiritual Homilies takes on an entirely new complexion.

c. *The* Epistula Magna

The light which has been thrown on the Spiritual Homilies receives an enhanced importance because another question of great significance for

[33] VÖÖBUS, *Early Versions of the NT, p. 130.*

[34] VÖÖBUS, *Studies in the History of the Gospel Text in Syriac* I, p. 111.

[35] VÖÖBUS, *On the Historical Importance of the Legacy of Pseudo-Macarios*, p. 21ff.; see also BAKER, «Syriac and Scriptural Quotations of Ps. Macarius», p. 133ff.

[36] About the archaic from of the text with its Targumic Background, see VÖÖBUS, *Peschitta und Targumim des Pentateuchs*, p. 105ff.

[37] Also the liturgical practice in Ps.-Macarius reflects the same background. «Die Syrer kannten eine abweichende Taufliturgie: die Salbung fand vor der Wassertaufe statt und war deshalb so wichtig, weil in ihr die Geistübermittlung sich vollzog. Man hat mit Recht behauptet, diese syrische Taufliturgie gehe auf palästinische Vorbilder zurück. So ist auch in diesem Fall Makarius dem Judenchristentum verpflichtet, wenn er die Salbung der Christen bei der Taufe hervorhebt», G. QUISPEL, *Makarius, das Thomasevangelium und das Lied von der Perle*, p. 12.

the history of early Christian literature and spirituality is involved, namely of the relationship between the *Epistula magna* by Pseudo-Macarios and the *De instituto christiano*[1] by Gregory of Nyssa. This question, one of great importance, can now be given new illumination[2].

In the year 1954, Jaeger asserted that the treatise of Gregory was original and the *Epistula magna* secondary, leaning heavily on the work of Gregory[3]. Whereas the *De instituto christiano* was an authentic work of the Cappadocian Father, the *Epistula magna*, in his view, was nothing more than an expanded metaphrase of Gregory's treatise. Jaeger was convinced that he definitively resolved this literary problem. He rejoiced that he had freed Macarios from the stigma of the Messalian heresy: since the *Epistula magna* rested on Gregory's treatise, its basic views therefore must come from a Father whose orthodoxy is in perfect order.

Judging from the chorus of laudation with which his solution was greeted, the assertion that the author of the Spiritual Homilies was a disciple of Gregory came be regarded as axiomatic[4]. For many, it had been a very touchy and disturbing matter, that Gregory, a father and luminary of the church, had depended upon a source compromised by the Messalian heresy. From this perspective, the proposed solution brought great relief.

However, new avenues have been opened up and these have thrown new light upon the background of the Spiritual Homilies. That, in turn, has created new perspectives on the matter of the literary relationship between these sources.

There is a premise which is absolutely necessary in approaching this problem. It concern the awareness that we have to do with a different cultural background behind the *Epistula magna* and the Spiritual Homilies, a cultural background that stems from the Syrian Orient. Given such an awareness, the entire question takes on a new and different complexion vis-à-vis the issues involved. In this regard, it is the lack of knowledge about Syrian spirituality which has a physiognomy of its own which proves fatal to Jaeger's thesis. He cannot see the great coordinates in the Syrian cultural background and must therefore depend upon differences that concern little more than stylistic matters[5].

[1] *Gregorii Nysseni opera ascetica*, ed. JAEGER-CAVARNOS-CALLAHAN VIII, 1, p. 40ff.
[2] VÖÖBUS, *On the Historical Importance of the Legacy of Ps.-Macarios*, p. 27ff.
[3] *Two Rediscovered Works*, p. 174.
[4] BOUYER, *La spiritualité du Nouveau Testament et des Pères*, p. 444ff.; BENZ, *Die protestantische Thebais*, p. 131.
[5] *Two Rediscovered Works*, p. 204.

But far more is involved than stylistic differences, namely, an entirely different culture and a different understanding of religion, and only from a vantage point do new and promising observations become possible.

First, let us look at the Syrian and the Greek genius in confrontation. With regard to the arrangement of the ascetic life in practice, the *Epistula magna* presents a very clear and coherent picture. The ones ταῖς εὐχαῖς προσκαρτερεῖν ἑαυτοὺς ἀναγκάζοντες[6] represent a special category of monks, separated from the wider community of monks. Here an elite group comes into the limelight in the arena of ascetic struggle and spiritual exercises, devoted to constant prayer and meditation[7]. Thus two segments in the ascetic communities are distinguished from one another and the talk about them and their respective functions leave nothing to be desired in lucidity.

It becomes apparent immediately that such an indigenous Syrian form of monastic life was totally foreign to Gregory. He had no appreciation for it and that is to be expected. This can be seen in the fact that he left out the characteristic term and modified the formulations; further, when the term does slip from his pen, it is rendered meaningless in the context of the alterations he introduced into the text. Here is disclosed, in fact, a kind of blundering treatment. His metaphrase, to be sure, takes over elements from the *Epistula magna* but the changes he makes entirely disregard the need for appropriate integration. As a result, that which he wrote hangs in the air and ends in confusion[8].

Since we are moving on the terrain of ascetic life, it is instructive to examine the basic terminology of asceticism. Forcefully represented in the *Epistula magna*, for example, is the term ἄσκησις, *ʿanwayūtā*, a central and most important conception of asceticism[9]. It is potent because of its all-inclusiveness, embracing as it does the whole of the ascetic struggle. It is a term which brings all manner of ascetic practices in mortification under a single denominator[10]. The bearers at this level of asceticism are ἀσκηταί *ʿanwāyē*, whether members of the elite[11],

[6] *Epistula magna*, p. 279, 17.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 279, 15-21.
[8] The text dealing with two categories of monks which is crystal clear in the *Epistula magna*, has become in Gregory's hands so confused that the readers cannot see what he is talking about. See *De instituto christiano*, p. 87, 7-9.
[9] See its position in heading the row: ἄσκησις, σπουδή, ἀγών, *Epistula magna*, p. 297, 24.
[10] Περὶ δὲ τῆς φαινομένης ἀσκήσεως, *ibid.*, p. 268, 1-2.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 258, 3.

engaged in acts of mortification, or as those also involved in the leadership of the monastic communities[12].

As is to be expected, Gregory has no interest in the concept of asceticism represented by the *ʿanwayūtā*. These and other terms have found no mercy in his eyes. They have totally been left out; no traces remain. In short, they were patently too strange for his own ascetic concepts and terminology[13].

In this connection, it should be mentioned that the same happened to another term also of a cast not popular among Greek sources. The term ἀδελφότης, *ʾaḥūtā*, which appears so frequently in the *Epistula magna*[14] is left out altogether by Gregory[15].

Special interest is aroused by the preoccupation of the elite in the monasteries with prayer. This appears in a lucid treatment of the virtues in the *Epistula magna*. This «holy and spiritual chain» brings altogether eleven virtues[16]. It is to be expected that prayer heads the list. It is also to be expected that in addition to this position of honor, a certain elevation of this activity would be highlighted. Indeed, the text confirms this with the comment that steadfast perseverance in prayer is the sum of all good endeavors[17] and the peak of all good works[18]. As a matter of fact, even the reasons for this are given: union with God and the kindling of the heavenly Agape occurs through prayer[19]. All this is in perfect accord with the religious and ascetic postulations of his author and the inner logic of his presentation.

That which the text of Gregory offers, by comparison is, indeed, very curious. He brings the same list of eleven virtues[20] — but he places prayer at the end[21]. It is impossible to elicit any other explanation for this then that he wished to introduce a deliberate corrective. There can be no scintilla of doubt regarding this. Yet more than is necessary is given us. The secondary character of this text is corroborated by the same

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 258,9-11; 259,15.

[13] Gregory's monastic vocabulary is different and he does not use these terms in this way; Cf. VÖLKER, *Gregor von Nyssa als Mystiker*, p. 254.

[14] *Epistula magna*, p. 234,4; 256,7.16; 257,1; 258,9.16.20; 271,4; 283,5.

[15] Only in a single instance could it escape Gregory's scalpel. *De instituto christiano*, p. 67,6.

[16] *Epistula magna*, p. 268,5ff.

[17] Κεφάλαιον δὲ πάσης ἀγαθῆς σπουδῆς, *ibid.*, p. 268,20.

[18] Κορυφαῖον τῶν κατορθωμάτων, *ibid.*, p. 268,20 - 269,1.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 269,3-9.

[20] *De instituto christiano*, p. 77,15ff.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 78,4.

blundering metaphrasis which we have already noticed. Gregory's treatment of the virtues begins with the unequivocal statement that all the virtues are equal and then none should be estimated more highly than any other[22]. But then when he comes to the end, he suddenly says that prayer is the leader in the chorus of virtues[23]. He has obviously picked up the text of the *Epistula magna* — thoughtlessly. That vacillation and confusion exhibits the same lack of integration and inner logic in his metaphrastic recast.

This case also shows how these two minds of different orientation departed from each other in their understanding of the role of pneumatism.

For the author of the *Epistula magna*, the ultimate vision of pneumatism consists in this, that it represents complete purity from shame, a complete deliverance from the passions, the full, unutterable and mystical fellowship in sanctification through the divine power of the Spirit, which becomes active in the hearts of the saints made worthy of the new, superhuman and spiritual enjoyment of the virtues[24]. Brought into focus here is the fellowship with the Spirit[25] in mystical experience — the supreme desire of the passionate psyche of the Syrians.

But what becomes of such an esoteric text at the hands of Gregory? Not much is left[26] of the vision depicted in such glowing terms in the *Epistula magna*. Gregory's is indwelling[27], and with it, his corrective: such an indwelling does not produce a complete deliverance from the passion but only from every evil[28]. Mystical experience is not within his purview and has therefore been left out entirely.

Face-to-face with such a state of affairs — these examples can be extended[29] — only one conclusion becomes possible for those who take the different *Sitz im Leben* in these two literary sources into account. It is quite understandable that Gregory would use a text which fascinated him because of its deep spirituality, for that interest also appears in another of his writings[30]. But he felt it necessary to make changes, modifications

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 77,16-20.

[23] Κορυφαῖός τις τοῦ χοροῦ τῶν ἀρετῶν, *ibid.*, p. 78,9-20.

[24] *Epistula magna*, p. 251,23 - 252,10.

[25] Καὶ μυστικὴν ἐν ἁγιασμῷ κοινωνίαν, *ibid.*, p. 252,7.

[26] *De instituto christiano*, p. 61,17 - 19.

[27] ... ἐνοίκησιν τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος, *ibid.*, p. 61,19.

[28] ...πάσης ἀπηλλαγμένη κακίας καὶ πονηρίας καὶ αἰσχύνης, *ibid.*, p. 61,18-19.

[29] STAATS, *Gregor von Nyssa und die Messalianer*, p. 17ff.

[30] Evidence for this interest appears in another of his writings, namely *In suam*

and adjustments. For the author of the Spiritual Homilies, on the other hand, for this person with a far deeper grasp of religion, of supreme goals in spirituality and higher aspiration, of richer insight and more passionate fervor, such a text as Gregory's was not needed as the base for his writing. Everything we learn of his talents and gifts and of his sense of style militates against this.

Another route can advance our investigation, namely an exploration into the world of the biblical text used in the *Epistula magna.* It presents us with an archaic biblical text and thus provides us with new evidence in the quest for a solution to the question of the relationship between Gregory and the *Epistula magna.*

When this material is scrutinized, the conclusion is unavoidable. The *Epistula magna,* with its archaic readings, must be primary; furthermore, just such a text would have evoked corrections and adjustments from Gregory. Consequently, Gregory's treatise must be secondary. Moreover, as the scrutiny of the entire biblical material demonstrates, Gregory's modifications and changes exhibit blunders as we have already noted. The organic relation between the authentic lemmata and the treatment of them in the context shows disjunctions and occasionally even confusion.

Our exploration has taken us substantively forward and the new findings and insights, as a result of long research, call forth new efforts to deal with the material. It is not enough somehow to insert the results into the picture of history for results such as these change the picture itself. As a consequence, the role of Gregory of Nyssa, in the role of asceticism and mysticism, must be rewritten, and that carries with it far-reaching corollaries of considerable relevance. In the history of spirituality and mysticism, the new perspectives must take a fundamental factor, the Syrian Orient, into account.

d. *Additional Salient Ideas*

The Spiritual Homilies impress the reader through the richness of the pictures and figures employed. These make the reading attractive. The

ordinationem, ed. MIGNE, col. 523ff. In this writing he expresses his admiration for the Mesopotamian ascetics because of their high level of spirituality. He says that they instill a feeling of awe owing to their spiritual and pneumatic attainments. In this connection he speaks even of a resurgence of the primitive Christian ethos which made a deep impact upon society. Gregory admits that this deepening of the quest of spirituality is beneficial for Christianity as a whole.

form is commensurate with the profundity of the spiritual content. Every polemical tendency is absent and the entire scene is peaceful and serene. The homilies are thoroughly permeated with a personal pastoral flavor. The whole is presented in so simple and dignified a way that gnostic ideas and high-flying speculation find no place in them. They convey a spirit of intimacy which seeks to embrace the reader. With qualities such as this, the Spiritual Homilies have enjoyed an immense élan. Translations of them into German, English and other languages have influenced spirituality in the West, particularly in the movement of Pietism[1].

Insofar as the physiognomy of the thoughtworld of the Spiritual Homilies is concerned, one must refer first of all to its peculiar complexion. As we have already seen, these homilies flow from background related to the Messalians, a powerful movement[2] which once has played a very important role in ascetic and monastic circles. There is no need to bring forward everything that the heresiologies[3] and historical sources[4] have assembled. It suffices to say that the main feature of this movement was the emphasis upon the importance of an unending prayer and of waiting for the coming of the Holy Spirit, somatically experienced. This movement, in its various ramifications, represented a form of mysticism. Of course, in view of the heavy pneumatic orientation, it is natural that the church and the sacraments lost here their significance. That such a movement would come into severe conflict with the ecclesiastical authorities, that was inevitable. Yet, everything represented by this movement in these homilies constitutes only no more than background for the basic tenets in the homilies which have been attenuated to such a degree that virtually nothing provocative is left behind. However, the original atmosphere is nevertheless discernable.

The Spiritual Homilies deal with the way that leads man to his true destiny. In that connection, the idea of regaining paradise is very prominent. An entire homily is devoted to this central theme[5]. It comes up again and again. It is clear that the monastic life represents the return of man to the place he belongs, namely, heavenly paradise.

[1] BENZ, *Die protestantische Thebais,* p. 131ff.
[2] VÖÖBUS, *Les messaliens et les réformes de Barṣauma de Nisibe.*
[3] KMOSKO, *Liber graduum,* Introductio.
[4] VÖÖBUS, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient* II, p. 147ff.
[5] *Die 50 geistlichen Homilien* XXXVII, ed. DÖRRIES-KLOSTERMANN-KROEGER, p. 265ff.

The path goes from obedience to the gospel injunctions to the imitation of Christ, the supreme example.

This avenue involves a very hard struggle[6], one which determines growth in the spiritual life and victory over all the passions. Main components in the discipline to be followed are asceticism and prayer. The importance of the prayer is presented in such a way that in the struggle besides asceticism, it occupies the most important role alongside with asceticism. Its significance at this very point in the struggle is clearly emphasized. Prayer must always take place in an internally concentrated way and in connection with a steady examination of one's thoughts. The prayer life imparts a quasi-liturgical aspect to ascetic practice.

Not only is prayer at the top of the list of spiritual activities, its function also is understood in singular fashion. Prayer is seen to be not only an avenue to spiritual growth but also as an instrument for supernatural experiences. Expectations with regard to prayer are boundless — they lead to a rapture which carries one into the unfathomable depths of the eternal world whose bliss is to be tasted during the trance[7].

One aspect which must be singled out in the thoughtworld of the Spiritual Homilies is the gift of grace. The homilies constantly issue admonitions about the self-delusion that monastic schema and ascetic practices alone are sufficient. Warnings against the idea of justification by way of ascetic achievement, affirming that perfection cannot be reached in that way nor without the assistance of the Spirit, frequently appear. Grace, though, is foreign to human nature, must be joined or connected with it and be absorbed by it. In order to become free of evil, the help of the grace of God is utterly necessary. Only with such grace is it possible to overcome evil in the heart. Only in that fashion is a cleansed and sanctified heart possible.

The Spiritual Homilies encourage ascetics to devote themselves to perseverance and patience with respect to the gift of grace — for God does not give His grace immediately; first He waits and observes the ascetic in his practice. On the experience of grace and the reception of its gifts, the homilies caution that such an occurrence cannot be taken as a sign that the soul is fully illumined; grace visits one initially only in part. The admonitions against the pride of ascetics about the reception of the charisma[8] thus are frequent.

[6] Besides the term ἀγών used most frequently to express the struggle there are other terms; the most characteristic are: πόλεμος, πάλη, κάματος, ἄθλησις.

[7] *Ibid.*, VIII,2-3, p. 77ff.

[8] Another serious warning is this that grace can withdraw itself and leave the ascetic.

The author insists, just as in the case of evil, so too in that of grace that it is perceived and apprehended by the inner man. The Spiritual Homilies display a very lively awareness of the working of the Spirit. The Spirit is the source for many charismas and levels of grace. The experience of the Spirit is a *Leitmotif* which thoroughly permeates all the texts of this source. All progress in the realm of the Spirit is contingent upon it. It is a *conditio sine qua non*[9]. The author has suffused his homilies with experiences, investing them with a special quality.

In view of the pneumatic world-view in the homilies, the role of the earthly church and its sacraments recede into the background. All interest belongs only to the heavenly church[10]. As a result, the church and its sacraments can have only a spiritualized meaning. That which is really important in baptism is the second baptism, a mystical renewal in Christ which belongs only to the perfect.

The level of perfection is nothing else than a gift of the Spirit. It is a condition where the passions disappear and complete freedom occurs. Perfection is an absolute freedom from all passions and, as such, is the sanctification of the soul.

This state is described in different terms. One such is ἀνάπαυσις, a deeper spiritual experience, an attainment, climbing up the ladder of spiritual pursuit to the level of enlightenment, to an inexpressable mystical illumination and an ineffable fellowship with the unseen world. These ideas root in very ancient strata in ancient Syrian ascetic thought as is particularly manifested in the Odes of Solomon — especially rich in this respect[11] — and in the Acts of Thomas[12]. We have to do with the idea: *neyaḥa* «rest». This level is described as the attainment of such a plateau in the pursuit of spiritual life that the language of the ancients, the gifts of prophecy, all knowledge and all the gifts of healing appear to the author as nothing by comparison with the experiences of the perfect love which embraces the soul[13]. That is to say, the appearance of the true

[9] This is illustrated by the meaning given to the parable of the Ten Virgins. According to this, the oil used by the five prudent virgins is the oil of the Spirit, *Die 50 geistlichen Homilien* IV,6, p. 31; *Neue Homilien* XXVIII, p. 165; *Epistula magna*, p. 274f.

[10] ἡ ἐπουράνιος ἐκκλησία, *Die 50 geistlichen Homilien* XXXVIII, 3; cf. I,3; 15,45-51; XXVII, 4, p. 40; οὐρανοῖς ἐκκλησία, XXV, 7, *ibid.*, p. 35; ἡ ἐπουράνιος ἐκκλησία τῶν ἁγίων XLIV, 4, p. 10.

[11] Ode III,5; XI,12; XXV,12; XXVI,6; XXX,2-3.7; XII, ed. MINGANA.

[12] Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles, ed. WRIGHT, *passim*.

[13] *Epistula magna*, p. 250f.

light of God developed into a mysticism of light phenomena; upon occasion, this divine light is also described as divine fire.

The picture of mysticism in the thoughtworld of the Spiritual Homilies would not be adequate without reference to two particularly significant aspects.

One of these which plays a very important role in the thoughtworld of the Spiritual Homilies is the spiritualization of the cross. Imagery is developed into a monastic mysticism of the cross. According to this author, Christ's followers are mystically crucified with him. One consequence of this imagery is this, that it leads to suffering[14]. This idea becomes the very foundation for the theology of martyrdom which permeates the entire thoughtworld.

Intensive contemplation found new ideas to invest the cross with new meanings, nourishing exuberant speculations. Christ is the true wood of the cross — and from the wood of the cross he wanted to bloom up to paradise[15]. The cross also appears in visions as the cross of light when the ascetic has attained the level of perfection[16]. The author also dwells on the imagery of the imprint of the cross: Christ imprints the sign of the cross into the soul[17]. This experience is the deepest one can perceive for this imprinted cross it since leads to deification[18].

The other important aspect in this mystical imagery circles around the «image» of God[19]. This theme is presented in all of its variations. The author speaks of the new «image», then of the heavenly «image», then of the celestial «fire» which makes the heavenly «image». An ascetic must pray to Christ that his own «image» will light up the soul. This term is enriched with another vivid picture in which Christ is compared with a painter, as one who, with his spirit and the nature of light[20], paints an «image» according to his own image — an idea which recalls a Manichaean theme[21]. The author also speaks of the restitution of the «image»[22]. The realization of the heavenly «image» means the

[14] *Die 50 geistlichen Homilien* XV,11-12.
[15] *Ibid.*, XLVII,15.
[16] *Ibid.*, VIII,3.
[17] σημεῖον καὶ σίγνον ... τοῦ κυρίου ἐντυπούμενον ταῖς ψυχαῖς, *ibid.* XXX, 5; cf. XXV, 4.
[18] *Ibid.*, XV,35.
[19] Genesis I,26.
[20] *Ibid.*, XXX,5.
[21] *A Manichaean Psalm Book* CCXXIII, ed. ALLBERRY II, p. 11.
[22] *Die 50 geistlichen Homilien* XI,6; XXVI,1-2; XXX,5; *Neue Homilien* CXXXVI,1.

spiritual rebirth. After this has taken place, the ascetic is restored to the condition of Adam and, moreover, can become even more excellent than the first man[23].

[23] *Die 50 geistlichen Homilien* XVI,4.

II. MONASTICISM IN THE LIGHT OF THE EARLIEST LEGISLATIVE SOURCES

1. The canons of Rabbūlā of Edessa

a. *The author*

First of all it is important to look at that which was produced in the area of monastic legislation during the earliest period in the development of the monastic movement. It is most instructive to observe what these ancient records themselves have to say.

The oldest legislation for monastic communities is connected with the activities and accomplishments of Rabbūlā, the bishop of Edessa. Rabbūlā is a figure[1] whose activities have made an impression upon several areas: church history, the history of literature[2], the christological controversies[3], New Testament textual history[4] and the history of monasticism. In all of these areas of study more information than is offered in his panegyric in Syriac[5] and another source in the Greek translation[6] is needed.

Rabbūlā's conversion took place about the year 400[7]. His relations with a monastic community were of far-reaching importance. It is reported that the change in Rabbūlā's life was brought about by a monk Abraham[8], a recluse at a monastery located on the borderline of the desert of Qennešrīn (Chalcis), not far from the property of this well-to-do pagan. His curiosity grew to admiration and eventually led to his conversion to the Christian faith. He was then instructed in the Monastery of Marqianos and in that of Abraham. He entered the last of

[1] Peeters, «La vie de Rabboula», p. 170ff.; Blum, *Rabbula von Edessa*, p. 1ff.

[2] Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, p. 71ff.

[3] Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement.*

[4] Vööbus, *Investigations*, p. 44ff.

[5] *Opera selecta*, ed. Overbeck, p. 159ff. About the literary history of this document see Vööbus, «Das literarische Verhältnis zwischen der Biographie des Rabbūlā und dem Ps. -Amphilochianischen Panegyrikus über Basilius», p. 40ff.

[6] Vööbus, *Vie d'Alexandre en grec.*

[7] The story of this conversion appears in a Greek source, *Vie d'Alexandre l'Acémète*, éd. De Stoop, p. 663ff. Cf. Vööbus, *Vie d'Alexandre en grec*, p. 12ff.

[8] *Opera selecta*, p. 161ff. He has been mentioned as an important monk in Chalcis, Theodoretos, *Historia eccl.* IV,27, ed. Parmentier, p. 268.

these institution's as a monk, after he had brought his wife and children to convent.

In the year 411, when Bishop Diogenis died[9], Rabbūlā was elected bishop of Edessa. He is reported to have carried the monastic mode into the bishop's residence in the metropolis of Edessa.

Such a man was certainly keenly interested in the furtherance of monasticism. As his biography shows, Rabbūlā developed wide connections with monastic communities, even beyond the confines of this own diocese[10].

b. *The Sources*

From Rabbūlā, we have a cycle of canons for monks. They bear the stamp of Rabbūlā's monastic tenets, tenets formed during his stay in the monastery, and reflect a reaction to the expanding process of coenobitism, in the interest of the more archaic[1] Syrian monastic traditions. These canons indeed were admirably suited to be a bulwark, against the tide of newer views and trends.

The cycle of his monastic canons bears the title: «Admonitions regarding the monks from the same Mār Rabbūlā, bishop of 'Ūrhāi»[2]. These canons were known in the monastic literature of the West Syrians, and Rabbūlā's rules were included in the collection of legislative sources of the church[3] as well as its codification work[4].

Insofar as the origin of these canons is concerned, there seems to be reason to impune the legitimacy of their appeal to the energetic bishop of Edessa. In the formulation of many an individual canon however, Rabbūlā may well borrowed the substance from older traditions.

There was a particular reason for his interest and concern. It must be kept in mind that Rabbūlā's endeavors belong to a period characterized by the new movements which tended towards the expansion of coenobi-

[9] *Chronicon Edessenum*, ed. Guidi, p. 6.

[10] *Opera selecta*, p. 205.

[1] Vööbus, «Le reflet du monachisme primitif», p. 299ff.

[2] So in Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,652, fol. 131a.

[3] The title of the cycle embedded into the synodicon in Ms. Damascus Patr. 8/11 reads:

ܩܢܘ̈ܢܐ ܕܡܛܠ ܠܛܘܟܣܐ ܕܕܝܪ̈ܝܐ ܕܩܕܝܫܐ ܡܪܝ، ܪܒܘܠܐ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܐܘܪܗܝ، ܡܕܝܢܬܐ

«the canons regarding the order of the monks by the holy Mār Rabbūlā, bishop of the town of 'Urhāi», *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition*, ed. Vööbus I, p. 156.

[4] *Nomocanon*, ed. Bedjan, p. 110f.

tism — with all the consequences that this entailed — which caused in many quarters grave concern to those who followed this development with an eye of suspicion and a sense of alarm[5]. It is instructive to notice that the monasteries with which Rabbūlā had contact were of a special character. These were those characterized as relying «on God's grace»[6]. This form of monastic communities refers to a type which allowed coenobitism, making a concession to this form of life, but which rejected more advanced and developed forms, cutting away all possibilities for growth and development. By the way, the brief description of the monastery where Rabbūlā received his first impressions, made the first steps towards monastic discipline and received his monastic training, portrays this type of coenobitism[7]. It belonged to the same type of communal life. This fact is significant since it unfolds a phenomenon which is not isolated.

Historically speaking, we have before us a very important document for the history of Syrian monasticism. The cycle is not only the oldest exponent of the monastic rules in this genre. But it is particularly valuable because it comes from a very early stage in the development of the coenobitic form of life. It stems from a time when efforts were being made to erect a dam against the waves and streams of newer trends which were threatening the simple and primitive structure of the ascetic life. The way to more elaborate patterns was not to be encouraged.

From this man comes the earliest cycle of rules with the particular idiosyncrasies of this kind. In every way they bear the stamp of a strong position taken against expanding progress in the interest of the archaic Syrian traditions[8].

The canons talk about various matters in monastic life but they are not so informative about certain aspects which in other cases have found a more ample illumination cycles of monastic canons. Obviously these canons were intended to deal only with actual matters requiring close attention and vigilance. That is why these canons do not tell us about the routine of ascetic life in the monastic community nor about the timetable for the daily exercises, ascetic and religious. The canons also remain silent about organizational and administrative matters about which we would like to know much more.

[5] Vööbus, «Sur le développement de la phase cénobitique», p. 401ff.
[6] *Opera selecta*, p. $205_{22\text{-}24}$.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 167f.
[8] Vööbus, «Le reflet du monachisme primitif», p. 299ff.

It is time to give the word to the canons themselves and listen to what they have to tell us about the monastic communities fostered by the bishop of Edessa in his diocese.

c. *The canons*

Admonitions for the monks by Mār Rabbūlā, bishop of Edessa

1. Above all things the monks must take care that women never enter their monasteries.

2. The brothers of the monastery shall not enter the villages except only the *sāʿūrā*[1] who enters a village or a town shall not go around to the guest houses and pass the night with secular people, but only in the church or monastery if there is one nigh.

4. The monks shall not drink wine so that they will not blaspheme; especially are they to take pains that they do not buy (it) and drink.

5. The monks shall not grow hair and put on iron (weights) and hang (something on their bodies) except only those who confine themselves and do not go out of the place.

6. The *sāʿūrē* who go out on business of the monastery shall not put on garments of hair, nor shall any of the brothers outside the monastery, so that they will not despise the honor of the monastic garb.

7. None of the monks shall distribute[2] oil, especially to women; however, if there is one who evidently has the charisma[3], he shall give oil to men; and when there are women who are afflicted with sickness, it shall be sent to them through their husbands.

8. The commemoration feasts in the monastery shall not take place in the gathering of the people but only with the brothers of this monastery.

9. The monks shall not possess the goods of sheep nor of goats nor of horses and mules nor of other animals, except for one donkey (for those) who need it, or one yoke of oxen (for those) who seed (the field).

10. Books which are outside the faith of the church, shall not be (kept) in the monasteries.

11. There shall be no business affairs of buying and selling in the monasteries, except only for that which is sufficient for their needs, without greediness.

[1] ܣܥܘܪܐ.
[2] Lit.: «make».
[3] ܛܝܒܘܬܐ.

12. None of those brothers who are in the monasteries shall possess anything privately for himself besides that which belongs to the community of brothers and is under the authority of the abbots[4].

13. The abbots shall not allow the brothers to meet with their relatives nor that they go out and go to them, in order that they do not relax (in their zeal).

14. The brothers shall not leave their monasteries under the pretext of sicknesses, and roam in the towns and villages, but shall endure their pains in the monasteries for the sake of God's love.

15. The monks shall not leave their residence and suborn[5] the judges by themselves on behalf[6] of others, and go into the towns or to the judges.

16. The monks shall not, under the pretext of occupation and work, fail the times that are appointed for the worship service (by) day and (by) night.

17. They shall receive strangers kindly, and shall not close the door in the face of one of the brothers.

18. None of the brothers shall dwell in isolation except he who has given proof regarding his works over a long period of time.

19. None of the monks shall give[7] answers from the book (of the Scriptures) to any one.

20. None of the brothers, if he is not a presbyter or a deacon, shall dare to give the eucharist.

21. (For) those who are (to be) priests and deacons in the monasteries and to whom churches in the villages are to be entrusted, the abbots in their monasteries shall appoint those who have shown proof of reliability and are able to guide the brotherhood, and those shall remain in their churches.

22. Bones of the martyrs shall not be found in the monasteries but everyone who has them shall bring them to us so that, if they are genuine, (they) shall be honored in the martyria, but if not, these shall be placed in the cemetery.

23. Those of the monks who wish to make the *gūrnē*[9] of the dead for them, shall hide them in the ground, so that these shall not be seen at all.

24. When a brother or an abbot of one of the monasteries departs

[4] ܪܝܫ ܕܝܪ̈ܬܐ.

[5] ܘܐܠܨܝܢ ܠܗܘܢ.

[6] lit.: «in the person», πρόσωπον.

[7] Lit.: «carry».

[8] ܓܘܪ̈ܢܐ.

from this world, those brothers of this monastery alone shall bury him in quietness; and if they are not sufficient (for this), they shall call brothers from the monastery that is near to them (to be) with them, and shall not gather (the people) from the villages and lay people for the procession.

25. If one shall sell the crop for the benefit of the monastery, he shall not take anything more than (the price) as it is selling at the time of that threshing-season, so shall he sell, in order that he will not covet in behalf of the monastery.

26. None shall receive a brother who moves from monastery to monastery without the word (assignment) of the abbot with whom he was (domiciled).

This is the account of the canons for the monks. The supplement which comes from another cycle of canons prepared by the very same Rabbūlā is very meager; it is included in a cycle prepared by Rabbūlā for the clergy and the *qeyāmā*[9]. But since they put certain other aspects of the monastic life on display they are welcome and follow here immediately.

15. The priests and deacons shall take care of monks who are in their territories; they shall take care of them as of their (own) members.

The shall also encourage[10] lay people so that they will share (of their goods) for the bodily (needs of the monks).

Also that women shall not enter inside the gates of their monasteries.

22. The periodeutae[11] or the priests or deacons shall not stay in (public) lodgings or in an inn[12] when they enter a town, but they shall stay in the xenodocheion[13] of the church or in the monasteries outside.

29. Send into the monasteries the *benai qeyāmā* or the *benat qeyāmā*, who have fallen from the ranks, for repentance.

[9] A critical edition of this has appeared in: *Syriac and Arabic Documents*, ed. Vööbus, p. 26-56.

[10] Lit.: «excite».

[11] περιοδευτής.

[12] ܦܘܬܩܐ.

[13] ξενοδοχεῖον. So the rendering appears in Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,652, fol. 125a-131a.; the codex comes from the 6th cent., Wright, *Catalogue* II, p. 651f. It is absent in Ms. Paris Syr. 62, fol. 227a-229d, in a manuscript that comes from the 9th cent.; Zotenberg, *Catalogue*, p. 22ff. Ms. Birmingham Ming. Syr. 8, fol. 148b-152b, of the year 1911 A.D., Mingana, *Catalogue* i, col. 25ff., and Ms. Šarfeh Patr., Syr. 73, fol. 164b-168b, of the 19th cent., belong to the same company.

But[14] although they stay in the monastery they shall not be received in the church, but be suspended[15] with their parents for as long as is right.

49. Do not permit any one of the heretics[16] to dwell in the monastery. And any of the heretics who come to the church and is divided in his mind, shall not receive the eucharist.

Here it must be stated that textually the last ordinance has not been preserved in its original or in its more logical form in the earliest manuscript[17]. In younger witnesses; the text instead of reading «to the church» here reads «to the monastery»[18].

d. *Observations About the Development in the Transmission of the Canons*

Since these rules enjoy a special role in the history of the Syrian monastic legislation and since in particular they bear a special stamp in connection with the history and the early development of the coenobitic form of life, it is at once informative and instructive to subject the whole story of transmission to scrutiny, for interesting highlights in this phase of the historical development are thus elicited.

Efforts have been made to dig deeper and to search out unknown manuscript sources which had been waiting in the Syrian Orient. Thereby new avenues have been opened and there is every reason to prepare for such a review with a feeling of excitement.

The oldest attainable form of the text of the canons appears in Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,652[1]. Its form reaches back into the sixth century[2]. Another form of the text which has secured its place in the Synodicon[3] stands very close to it[4]. Only in a few places does it shows deviation from the oldest witness[5].

[14] So in Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,652, fol. 125a-131a. Here an accretion ܠܐ ܡܬܬܦܣܩܝܢ appears in Ms. Paris Syr. 62, in Ms. Birmingham Ming. Syr. 8 and Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 73.

[15] ܚܕ ܚܠܡ.

[16] αἱρετικοί.

[17] Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,652, fol. 125a-131a.

[18] The rendering appears in the same company which includes Ms. Paris Syr. 62, Ms. Birmingham Ming. 8 and Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 73.

[1] Fol. 131a-133b.

[2] WRIGHT, *Catalogue* II, p. 561.

[3] Ms. Damascus Patr. 8/11, fol. 69a-70a.

[4] *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition* I, ed. VÖÖBUS, p. 156ff.

[5] They appear only in secondary variant readings which emerge in the oldest layer of the tradition.

Another sample of the cycle appears in the Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,526[6], which is somewhat younger and belongs to the seventh century[7]. It is most regrettable that this very ancient witness has included so brief a selection of canons[8]. The handling of the material by the compiler is surprising. On the one hand he has shortened the text; on the other hand he has supplemented it[9].

A deviant example of the cycle appears in Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,577[10]. This is a witness which comes from the eighth century[11]. It is characterized by certain omissions[12]. Textually it exhibits deviations but in general there are no more than a few quisquiliae. However, some improvements also show up[13]. In some places, the different readings seem to have been drawn from the original tradition[14].

Another witness in this cycle of canons, one which had developed into a stereotype model, appears in Ms. Mardin Orth. 309[15] which belongs to the eighth century. It stands in the company of two other witnesses[16], and these codices represent a somewhat older stage in which the process of revision was in full progress but which had not yet been brought to its conclusion[17].

[6] Fol. 30b-31a.

[7] WRIGHT, *Catalogue* II, p. 1033.

[8] The cycle represents selected canons incorporated into the collection of ecclesiastical canons. The cycle includes the following canons: 1,7-8, 15-16, 18 and 25.

[9] Two canons, namely Can. 17 and 48 were borrowed from Rabbūlā's cycle for the clergy and the *qeyāmā*; *Syriac and Arabic Documents*, ed. VÖÖBUS, p. 40, 48.

[10] Fol. 83b-84a.

[11] WRIGHT, *Catalogue* II, p. 784f.

[12] Can. 9-10, 15, 19, 21 and 23.

[13] In Can. 7 instead of the reading ܥܒܕ ܡܫܚܐ «to make oil» the rendering ܢܗܒ ܡܫܚܐ «to give oil» has been introduced. In Can. 18 the monks must give witness not about ܕܥܒ̈ܕܘܗܝ «his works» but about ܕܕܘܒܪ̈ܘܗܝ «his conversation» or «life».

[14] In Can. 24 the clause ܘܠܐ ܢܗܘܘܢ ܡܟܢܫܝܢ ܡܢ ܩܘܪ̈ܝܐ ܘܥ̈ܠܡܝܐ ܠܙܘܝܚܐ «and they shall not gather from the villages and the lay people for the procession» does not appear here. From other witnesses we notice that the position of this clause was not quite certain. Ms. Vatican Syr. 560 and Ms. Birmingham Ming. Syr. 8 introduce this clause somewhat earlier indicating that this was an element which was not rooted in the oldest tradition.

[15] Fol. 139a-140b.

[16] Ms. Mardin Orth. 310, fol. 117b-118b and Ms. Vatican Syr. 560, fol. 66a-67a; both manuscripts come from the 8th cent. About the manuscript in the Vatican, see VAN LANTSCHOOT, *Inventaire*, p. 78.

[17] Some accretions had not yet found access. However, Can. 17 of the cycle for the clergy and the *qeyāmā* had intruded into Can. 8.

A new witness lies in Ms. Paris Syr. 62[18]. A century younger, it stems from the ninth century[19]. This specimen unfolds the accelerated progress of revision[20]. This type, full-blown in revision, appears in the company of a larger number of manuscripts which our search has brought to the light[21].

The broad stream of the transmission is marked by a reworked structure, with the reversed sequence[22], with an accretion[23] and with an omission[24]. In vain does one seek for motives to justify the changes in the sequence of the canons. A new pattern has thus been imprinted on this type of the cycle. The redaction has moved in various directions. It has also involved linguistic refinement. Eclectic and syntactically uneasy places were smoothened out and renderings which evoked negative reaction were culled out. Attempts at greater accuracy and precision, as felt necessary, were made. Particularly conspicuous were those tried in connection with the canons dealing with relatives[25], religious activities[26], prophecies[27], law courts[28] and arrangements for the funerals of brothers[29] and abbots[30]. Some deliberate changes correcting archaic

[18] Fol. 226a-227a.
[19] ZOTENBERG, *Catalogue*, p. 29.
[20] Only in some places the original text has escaped redaction.
[21] Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 73, fol. 162a-164b, of the year 1911 A.D. Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 87, fol. 175a-176a, of the year 1907. Ms. Birmingham Ming. Syr. 8, fol. 147a-148b, of the year 1911, cf. MINGANA, *Catalogue* I, col. 22ff. Ms. Mardin Orth. 322, fol. 67a-68b; Ms. Mardin Orth. 327, fol. 103b-105a; Ms. Mardin Orth. 337, fol. 58b-60b, both manuscripts are not much older. Ms. Mosul Orth. 187, fol. 77a-78a, copied in the year 1921; Ms. Damascus Patr. 8/2, fol. 59b-61b, copied in the year 1938; Ms. Damascus Patr. 8/1, fol. 73a-75a, copied in the year 1941 A.D.
[22] In this cycle the sequences of the canons has been rearranged as follows: 1, 7-8, 15-16, 19, 25, 2-6, 9-14, 17-18, 21-24 and 26.
[23] Can. 17 taken from the cycle for the clergy and the *qeyāmā*.
[24] Can. 20 is absent.
[25] Can. 13 forbids the brothers to meet with their relatives and to visit them so that they do not relax in their zeal. The redaction gives a stronger explanation: ܡܢ ܚܫܚܐ ܕܠܐ ܝܘܬܪܢ «through an intercourse that is not useful».
[26] Can. 7 forbids the monks to distribute ܡܫܚܐ «oil». The redaction explains what is meant by this: ܡܫܚܐ ܕܨܠܘܬܐ «the oil of prayer».
[27] Can. 19 forbids the monks to use ܟܬܒܐ «book» for the purpose of prophecies. The recast text, however, reads here: ܟܬܒ̈ܐ ܩܕ̈ܝܫܐ «the Holy Scriptures».
[28] Can. 15 forbids any lawsuits undertaken for ܐܚܪ̈ܢܐ «for others». The revised form reads however: ܕܡܣܟ̈ܢܐ «for the poor».
[29] In Can. 24 in the case of a funeral if the physical strength of the monastic community is not sufficient, the monks are allowed to invite «brothers» from another monastery. The

practices which had in the course of time become inevitable, were introduced[31].

There is still another paradigm of the cycle[32], one whose extent has been reduced[33] and which textually takes a separate place in the history of the tradition[34].

Finally one must mention a recension which has been burdened through reworking and change. I refer to the form which Bar 'Ebrāyā has included in his work of codification[35]. The cycle in this form of the tradition also was put into circulation[36].

As our inquiry has shown, the textual transmission of these cycles unfolds an interesting history echoing the various trends, currents and streams, sometimes conflicting, in Syrian monasticism. These trends have left their marks upon the wording and revision of these canons. These changes or modifications speak of the need for the adaptation and revision of norms which, in the progress of time must have appeared to have been too rigid for the growing monastic communities. Thus these variants open up to us instructive perspectives on the evolving metamorphosis. This look into the labyrinth of the ramifications of the oldest Syrian monastic legislative document is a most interesting phenomenon. Behind these various retouches one can see the needs dictated by time.

2. The Rules Attributed to 'Aphrēm

a. *The source*

There was a time when only a single cycle of monastic canons was known, namely, the monastic canons of Rabbūlā. Continuous searching

rendering is revised to mean: ܠܐܚ̈ܐ ܐܚܪ̈ܢܐ ܠܡܥܕܪܢܗܘܢ «the other brothers for their help». The same canon forbids to invite «lay people»; for the same purpose the text is corrected to read: ܥܠܡܝ̈ܐ ܘܢܫ̈ܐ «lay people and women».
[30] In the same Can. 24 which regulates the arrangement for the funerals for the «brothers and abbots» a redaction has reduced the text which speaks only of abbots.
[31] According to Can. 9 the monastic community could own only ܚܕ ܚܡܪ «one donkey». Instead of this straightforward regulation the redaction reads: ܚܡܪ̈ܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ «only donkeys».
[32] Ms. Cambridge Add. 2023, fol. 238b-239a, of the 13th cent.; WRIGHT-COOK, *Catalogue* II, p. 600; cf. 621.
[33] This cycle is without Can. 5-7, 10, 15, 20-24 and 26.
[34] Particularly because of smaller alterations, transpositions and omissions.
[35] *Nomocanon* ed. BEDJAN, p. 110f.
[36] Ms. Berlin Sach. 335, fol. 59a-61b.

has brought many such documents out of their hiding places in the Syrian Orient and our knowledge of this genre of monastic legislation in Syrian monasticism has been considerably broadened. We can no longer complain about sources of this nature since we possess more than we could ever have expected to unearth, A problem, however, has arisen. It concerns the chronological side and the background of these sources. In this stage there is no other way to advance research than to test them on the basis of intrinsic evidence in order to draw some conclusions. The first such document concerns the rules which have been attributed to 'Aphrēm.

A cycle of injuctions cast into an acrostic[1] claims the right to bear 'Aphrēm's name. The question is, this cycle under the title «Admonitions of Mār 'Aphrēm arranged according to the alphabet»[2] stems from 'Aphrēm himself, this giant among the monastic authorities? What we find in the authentic part of this letter[3] and the original works[4] designed for the furtherance and propagation of monastic life, does not encourage us to answer this question in the affirmative. On the contrary, everyone who has become acquainted with 'Aphrēm's views is led to the recognition that 'Aphrēm certainly would have had much more to say about the meaning of monastic life and the ascetic profession[5]; he would not have neglected to include the fundamental concept of the ascetic existence[6], but would have poured something out of the burning lava of his experience of mortification into his expositions. In the light of these authentic documents, the rules appear too general and too colorless to be 'Aphrēm's. Furthermore they are formed in accordance with the pattern of wisdom literature, and constitute a conglomerate wherein very disparate elements and admonitions of a general kind stand side-by-side with concrete prescriptions.

Upon analysis, the formulations employed in the rules seem to leave the impression that some of 'Aphrēm's works were used as a basis. Indeed, certain phrases sound very much like those of 'Aphrēm[7]. In this instance, the piece is not the only example of the use of 'Aphrēm's works

[1] VÖÖBUS, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen* I, 1B, p. 359ff.

[2] ܡܘܗܪ̈ܐ ܕܡܪܝ ܐܦܪܝܡ ܘܣܝܡܝܢ ܥܠ ܐܠܦ ܒܝܬ.

[3] VÖÖBUS, *A Letter of Ephrem to the Mountaineers*.

[4] VÖÖBUS, *Untersuchungen über die Authentizität*, p. 4ff.; ID. «Beiträge zur kritischen Sichtung», p. 48ff.

[5] VÖÖBUS, «Le reflet du monachisme primitif», p. 200ff.

[6] VÖÖBUS, *Literary-Critical and Historical Studies*, p. 94ff.

[7] See particularly Can. 16, 17 and 18.

for the purpose of extracting rules[8]. From this point of view, it is not so surprising that these rules could circulate under 'Aphrēm's name. It is also altogether understandable that tradition claims that the Edessene master left rules for the monks[9].

On the other hand it is equally clear that the composition of the rules belongs to a period after 'Aphrēm's lifetime[10]. It is evident that these rules have the problems of the monastic community in view. Some of the rules have the definite purpose of meeting the needs of common life in the monastery, especially those involving the instruction of the novices. This alone is sufficient evidence that these rules belong to a period later than that of 'Aphrēm. Coenobitism does not belong to the sphere of his interest and in the rare instances where it does appear, it is peripheral[11]. As far as evidence reaches, 'Aphrēm never shows interest in the problems of the communal life. All his sharing of thought and encouragement reveals his affection for the anchoretic form of monasticism.

These remarks find support in the observation that the vocabulary used in the rules is not that of 'Aphrēm.

Only one codex[12] Ms. Mosul Syr. 99[13] has preserved this cycle of rules.

b. *The Canons*

Admonitions of Mār 'Aphrēm Arranged According to the Alphabet

1. Abraham was justified by his works. My brother, be vigilant in

[8] Ms. Mus. Borgia Arm. 60, fol. 62b contains such a cycle of rules based on 'Aphrēm's homilies on virginity, and translated into Armenian. Also Ms. Tübingen Ma XIII, 92, fol. 146aff. That 'Aphrēm's writings were used completely or partly in this way of extracting commandments, is a claim which the tradition presents. Among the unknown sources for this genre instructive examples appear in Ms. Mosul Chald. 1003, p. 91-101 representing ܦܘܩܕ̈ܢܐ as ascribed to 'Aphrēm, and Ms. Midyat Gülçe 9, quire 9, fol. 4a-10b which presents ܡܘܗܪ̈ܐ for Christians; about the manuscript, see VÖÖBUS, *Handschriftliche Überlieferung* I, p. 73f. A unique place belongs to «the canons for the scribes», preserved in Ms. Mardin Orth. 565, fol. 281b-282a.

[9] Ms. Paris Syr. 136, fol. 246b.

[10] VÖÖBUS, «Die Rolle der Regeln im syrischen Mönchtum», p. 386ff.

[11] See particularly the chapter «Groundlines of 'Aphrēm's Role in the History of the Syrian Monasticism», VÖÖBUS, *Literary-Critical and Historical Studies*, p. 125ff.

[12] Cf. *Studia syriaca*, p. 9f.

[13] The manuscript has been described by Rahmani, *ibid.*, p. 56. Is this Ms. Mosul Syr. 99, in the library of the Chaldean patriarchate. Cf. SCHER, «Notice sur les manuscrits syriaques du patriarcat chaldéen de Mossoul», p. 253.

your true teaching which you receive from your teachers. Nothing should be before your sight except a continuous obedience.

2. When you are walking on the street, dignify your steps and discipline your look and control your countenance; also do not eat anything on the street in order that the discipleship (of monasticism) will not be despised.

3. Select for yourself foremost diligence in learning[1]; give great honor to your fathers, to your masters, and to those who see you; your brothers will profit from you, and your companions will imitate the manner (of life) of your steadfastness.

4. (Above) good gold and precious stones and good gems and (emeralds) receive that which is the heavenly learning; and especially — above all your possessions — be diligent to obtain the truth.

5. Be a good example to your brothers and companions; and present continuous obedience in all matters and diligence on learning[2].

6. And if you are being sent on business, say what you have been told, do not say something (else) instead of this and (thereby) cause disturbance to those who sent you, and you would (then) be in trouble; moreover, add nothing nor reduce (anything).

7. Purify the mind of your boyhood, and approach the learning wholeheartedly[3] (well), and you will be worthy of the instruction of your masters, and you will teach (others) in like manner as they.

8. Make yourself wise (so that you may stay away) from all manners of your bodyhood[4]; remove from you all the works of boyhood and you will find good things for yourself.

9. It is good for you that you are being educated in the fear of your masters; and become humble and chaste and disciplined, and do not become undisciplined.

10. Noble is the youth who is being praised by those who behold it, and is being blessed by his Creator.

11. Rebuke the habits of youth that they may not multiply upon you and subdue you; and take care diligently in order that they will not be added, one upon another.

12. Do not become weary of resisting foul deeds; and if you set your

[1] Or: «doctrine».
[2] Or: «doctrine».
[3] Lit.: «entirely».
[4] Or: «youth».

(desire) on lust, (even) with great labor you will scarcely attain your desire.

13. When the vainglorious (thoughts) increase against you like in a child, take refuge[5] at the throne[6] of the Creator and inter them there.

14. Evil works of men are a devouring fire; and there is no limit to the evil that enslaves them.

15. Hope in the deliverance by him to whose throne[7] you take refuge[8]; and say as the Son of Jesse: «Teach me, Lord, the way of Thy commandments and I shall keep them»; and again say: «How love I Thy law! It is my meditation all the day»[9].

16. Exercise yourself in the holy psalms and behold you will save yourself like a bird from the snare of a hunter.

17. Slip your feet from the nooses of guile by meditating on the law of the Lord day and night.

18. Your hunter is unceasing and shrewd — (but) there is the Artificer, God, and he is able to free you from his guile.

19. Call on God for your help, and he will make of you a disciple of steadfastness.

Reconcile God by your service that you will not be accused because of one of the manners — because of jocular talk or because of laughter in order that you may not (bring) punishment upon your (own) head.

21. Praise God who made you worthy of his (monastic) institution; and pray for your masters who have been wearied, by labor, because of you; and for your fathers who have brought you to (monastic) instruction.

22. Let oaths to the Lord be far more honored by you than anything (so) that you shall guard[10] your conversation[11] and not drop your word in the community of your brothers[12] and companions except (saying) «It is so» — «It is not so»; in this way you will be honored before God and by men.

[5] Lit.: «run».
[6] Lit.: «door».
[7] Lit.: «door».
[8] Lit.: «run».
[9] Psalm CXIX, 33, 97.
[10] Lit.: «remember».
[11] Lit.: «in your mouth».
[12] Or: «among your brothers».

III. EARLY SOURCES OF STIMULI FOR ASCETICISM

1. The Contribution of Isḥāq of Antioch

a. *Introduction*

The following *mēmrē* come from an author whom tradition has related to 'Aphrēm. He is a very celebrated poet, Isḥāq of Antioch[1], who was born in Amid but worked as a priest in Antioch where he also developed his rich literary activity[2].

Tradition has connected this literary celebrity with 'Aphrēm[3]. However, the claim for a personal relationship between him and 'Aphrēm cannot be taken seriously. Chronological considerations make it impossible — Isḥāq was still alive when Antioch was struck by the earthquake in September 459[4]. Thus he could not have had any personal relationship with the literary giant of Edessa. According to another tradition, Isḥāq, though he did not enjoy an immediate personal contact with 'Aphrēm, did have an indirect relationship because he was a disciple of Zenobios[5], a well known pupil of 'Aphrēm.

Whatever the relation may have been, this famous poet has lent his supportive hand to the propagation of monastic ideas. Without a doubt, he has frequently turned his attention to this subject in the service of furthering ascetic spirituality. The manuscript evidence testifies that his writings became very popular and were well received, as a result of which they played a very important role in this genre of literature.

b. *A* Mēmrā *on Perfection*

A *mēmrā* titled:[1] «On the perfection of the brothers and on self-denial»[2] deserves to be introduced in the first instance. When this *mēmrā*

[1] Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, p. 63ff.
[2] Gennadius, *De viris illustribus*, ed. Richardson, p. 66.
[3] *Chronica minora*, ed. Brooks, p. 208; Abu-l-Barakat, *Miṣbaḥ aẓ-ẓilma*, ed. Riedel, p. 647; Petrus ibn Rahib, *Chronicon orientale*, ed. Cheikho, p. 112.
[4] One of his *mēmrē* he dedicated particularly to this great catastrophe.
[5] So in a corpus of his *mēmrē* in Ms. Vatican Syr. 119.

[1] ܥܠ ܓܡܝܪܘܬܐ ܕܐܚܐ ܘܡܣܪܩܘܬܐ.
[2] Its *incipit* reads: ܦܫܝܩ ܗܘ ܠܡܠܟܐ ܢܟܣܐ.

became first known[3] it did not have its indigenous form, having been inserted into the body of another *mēmrā* on repentance[4]. On the basis of content as well as the testimony of the manuscript tradition, it is clear that it is not a supplement to another *mēmrā* but is an independent treatise[5]. That new sources with this *mēmrā* have come to light[6] is very welcome.

As far as the integrity of the text is concerned, the manuscript shows that there are great differences in the text; occasionally greater sections are missing, particularly in the edition of Bedjan.

As a source for the inspiration and encouragement of the ascetics, Isḥāq uses the imagery taken from the military area carrying the analogy out even to detail. As in war, the most courageous stand in the first formations and in the front ranks of the soldiers, so is it the case for ascetics in the grand battle in which they are engaged against the evil one. As in an army headed by an earthly king, so also in the army of the ascetics are special qualifications[7] necessary, primarily courage, discipline, vigilance, fasting and continence, in order to follow the orders of the king — all for the sake of the great undertaking. Such imagery is intended to give constant encouragement and enthusiasm to the athletes involved in their privations, always keeping the utter seriousness of their engagement in view.

The intensity of vigilance[8] is especially emphasized. As in the situation of war, one's equipment cannot be put aside even for a moment because of the fear of attack by the enemy, so too must the spiritual fighters always be prepared for the moment of action, instantly ready as soon as the horn sounds the call for action. Such soldiers cannot loosen their girdle nor their shoelaces. Sleep for every one of them must be very scanty — for the same reason. Isḥāq's admonition is «When they realize and understand that one must live a life full of self-denial in war, (then) the more must the inner war be carried out with fasting and vigils in the night»[9].

[3] *Opera omnia*, ed. Bickell II, p. 266ff.
[4] *Ibid.*, II, p. 236ff.
[5] *Homilae*, ed. Bedjan, p. 539ff.
[6] Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 218, fol. 164a-170a.
[7] *Opera omnia*, ed. Bickell II, p. 270.
[8] *Ibid.*, II, p. 278-280.
[9] ܘܐܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܐܪܙܘܗ ܘܝܕܥܘ. ܕܒܩܪܒܐ ܒܨܘܡܐ ܚܝܢ. ܟܡܐ ܡܚܝܠ ܩܪܒܐ ܕܠܓܘ ܒܨܘܡܐ. ܒܨܘܡܐ ܘܒܫܗܪܐ ܕܠܠܝܐ, *ibid.*, II, p. 278 780-781.

This theme is one to which Isḥāq returns repeatedly, subjecting its various aspects and variations to elucidation. Obviously this theme was close to his heart.

Another theme which has held his attention has to do with the advantage offered by the desert for ascetics. Isḥāq urges his readers to look deeper in order to benefit from the unique advantages and qualities which only the desert can offer. By means of this rhetoric, Isḥāq brings these insights out very forcefully. He writes: «One does not erect goal stations in the towns nor does one shoot arrows and projectiles, for the art of archery is learned in the desert, and horses run on even ground»[10]. From this the conclusion drawn for the ascetics is this: «For the same reason also the righteous ones prefer the desert and love the mountains which are spacious and suitable for the spiritual struggle»[11]. Isḥāq inculcates a sense of awareness of all the advantages that accrue to those who live their lives out in the desert: «Blessed are you, dwellers of the desert, you who dwell between the rocks and caves, for you are far from the crime which is being committed in the towns»[12]. Their gains in the desert places are incalculable and they are urged steadily to strengthen their awareness of all the blessings which they are granted in desolate areas: «Behold, fear rules in the arena of civilization[13] and (any) entanglement in the towns — however, on the other hand peace rules in your caves and tranquility dwells in the desert»[14].

The theme of the glorious advantages of the desert is so important for the author that he comes back to it in order to create a crescendo to culminate his *mēmrā*[15]. He compares the brothers who live in the desert with eagles and other proud creatures which have been born in freedom in the deserts and on the mountains, in which they have absorbed all the qualities of pride, independence and spaciousness in which they have gained soundness and health; such normal creatures living under suitable

[10] ܠܐ ܡܩܝܡܝܢ ܢܝܫܐ ܘܫܕܝܢ. ܓܐܪ̈ܐ ܘܩ̈ܠܥܐ. ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܩܫܬܐ ܒܡܕܒܪܐ ܡܬܝܠܦܐ. ܘܒܦܩܥܬܐ ܪܗܛܝܢ ܪ̈ܟܫܐ, *ibid*, II, p. $288_{940\text{-}941}$.

[11] ܡܛܠ ܗܕܐ ܐܦ ܟܐܢ̈ܐ. ܓܒܝܢ ܠܡܕܒܪܐ. ܘܪܚܡܝܢ ܠܛܘܪ̈ܐ ܕܪܘܝܚܝܢ. ܠܐܬܠܝܬܐ ܕܪܘܚܐ ܘܕܠܝܠܝܢ, *ibid.*, II, p. $288_{942\text{-}943}$.

[12] ܛܘܒܝܟܘܢ ܥܡܪ̈ܝ ܡܕܒܪܐ. ܕܥܡܪܝܢ ܒܝܬ ܫܘ̈ܥܐ ܘܡܥܪ̈ܐ. ܕܪܚܝܩܝܢ ܐܢܬܘܢ ܡܢ ܥܘܠܐ. ܕܒܓܘ ܡܕ̈ܝܢܬܐ ܡܫܬܡܠܐ, *ibid.*, II, p. $290_{973\text{-}974}$.

[13] The Syriac term used here is: ܫܝܢܐ ; it means «peace», «tranquillity» but also «cultivated land».

[14] *Ibid.*, II, p. $294_{1022\text{-}1023}$.

[15] *Ibid.*, II, p. 326.

conditions become immediately sick of all the noise and confusion when brought into the cultivated regions — so also «the excellent men who dwell in the desert».

In the thoughtworld of Isḥāq one sees only very little of the typology often employed in connection with biblical sources — the author has found greater pleasure with other illustrations which he has handled rhetorically and with great effectiveness. The only instance of typology which appears in this source is taken from the episode of the forty years wandering of the Israelites in the desert[16], with all of the phenomena of miraculous feedings and acts of special divine protection, presented as the source of consolation and assurance of the divine succour and strength in their life full of privation.

In the imagery of Isḥāq one aspect is surprising; it is not found in other sources in this genre of literature. Isḥāq raises the philosophical theme of the freedom of the will. He wants to write for the encouragement and inspiration of those who keep to the tenet of the freedom of the will as over against those who teach that there is no freedom of the will at all. Isḥāq is convinced that this perspective is one which will be of help to spiritual athletes: «But I know that on the basis of my free will I either become defeated or become victorious — and therefore do not regard God as a companion of my sins and wicked works»[17]. Isḥāq adds that he has brought this issue forward in order to emphasize to his readers that they should consider themselves to be free men and use their freedom to the maximum.

In the monastic thought of Isḥāq, something else calls for special attention. The spiritual atmosphere which faces us here is different from that which we have noticed in previous sources. Having just treated the spiritual atmosphere which permeates the monastic thought of ʾAphrēm, one in which the spirit of mortification plays an important role, we suddenly are confronted with a spirit quite different in character. That which Isḥāq has penned on the issue of mortification is basically at odds with a philosophy of monastic life based on the torture of the body and the killing of the flesh. In fact, Isḥāq shows no understanding of the battle against the body. His concern lies elsewhere. He brings the soul

[16] *Ibid.*, II, p. 298.

[17] ܐܠܐ ܝܕܥ ܐܢܐ ܕܒܚܐܪܘܬܝ، ܡܬܙܟܐ ܐܢܐ ܘܙܟܐ ܐܢܐ. ܘܠܐܠܗܐ ܠܐ ܫܘܬܦܐ. ܣܒܪܐ ܕܚܛܗ̈ܐ ܘܥܒ̈ܕܐ, *ibid.*, II, $_{1258\text{-}1259}$.

into his focus[18] and lays stress upon the disposition[19]. Isḥāq commends the strife and struggle with the soul and he evaluates ascetic acts from the point of view of the help they provide in the struggle to win dominance of the soul over the body[20]. From this perspective, he allows himself the use of rather liberal statements. He speaks of fasting while eating, and of abstinence while drinking. He can even say: «Load your table with foods but your cup with God's praise»[21]. Thus he submits the idea of mortification to a severe critique[22]. He even ventures to say that the Apostle reprimands those who are so rigorously reckless with their bodies[23] and sneers at everything connected with the idea of mortification[24].

Isḥāq opens significant insights for us, allowing us to view certain features in the development of the monastic movement, thus contributing to our historical knowledge. One of these lets us see the rapid growth of monasteries among the Syrians. The expansion of the coenobitic form of monastic life which Isḥāq's *mēmrē* visualizes for us is very impressive. Many monasteries have emerged in this large-scale movement. The scenery had totally been changed and the landscape transformed by their great numbers. In one place where Isḥāq speaks of people seized by the spirit of rapture which moved them to undertake pilgrimages, he states that among them there were those who were eager to visit up to a hundred monasteries and to lay down their vows there[25].

This historical development had become a source of concern and worry for Isḥāq. It nagged him to such a degree that he had to find a way to vent his concern. As suitable occasions present themselves, he did just that.

This development is related to a phenomenon which began to flourish towards the end of the fourth century and took on ever increasing dimensions. Nothing less than a transformation in the monastic world of the Syrians was making itself felt[26]. The scene changed radically and took on a new complexion. Instead of primitive dwelling places and small

[18] *Homilae*, ed. BEDJAN I, p. 83.
[19] *Opera omnia* I, p. 266.
[20] *Ibid.* I, p. 250.
[21] *Ibid.*, I, p. 264, 266.
[22] *Ibid.*, II, p. 262ff.
[23] *Ibid.*, II, p. 263f.
[24] *Ibid.*, II, p. 254f., 260.
[25] *Ibid.*, II, p. 306.
[26] *Ibid.*, II, p. 146.

monastic communities, expanded institutions and great monastic communities emerged. Isḥāq compares these new monastic edifices with palaces[27]. Of course, the development was greatly fostered by such emperors as Arcadios and Theodosios who even put the state treasury at its disposal[28]. This is the same as that to be seen in another area where Syrian influence was operating. It is sufficient to mention here the name of Catholicos Nerses, the personage who is connected with a large-scale building program of monasteries equipped not only with the sacred buildings but also with the tombs of the dignitaries[29]. A look at the development in Armenia also helps us the better to understand that which took place in Syria and Mesopotamia.

In connection with this development, other phenomena emerged which seriously disturbed Isḥāq. He became very concerned over the fact that these monastic communities were furnished with fields, plantations, gardens and flocks of animals and herds[30]. That such a development involved grave consequences which Isḥāq viewed with the deepest of misgiving is patent — the monks had changed their profession for that of farmers.

Not only that, the role of the monks in society had also taken a new turn. They had left the quiet places in the deserts and mountains and had taken on a new role in public life. Isḥāq is convinced that the monks now enjoy too much publicity, too much honor so that even the high officials themselves go before these men in monastic garment. In his eyes, this development could only endanger and imperil the conception of the ascetic movement, as well as the integrity and dignity of the spiritual athletes[31].

Isḥāq highlights the ancient monastic ideal of poverty and privation and tries to inculcate these ancient ideas in his ascetic readers. He issues dire warnings and appeals to a return to the ideal of poverty. His appeals become more and more urgent, calling forth the whole of his persuasion, eloquence and cogency of argument. Isḥāq invests all of his strength to muster devout minds to remain faithful to this most basic ideal and to defend it against the subtle dangers which threaten it. On one occasion, Isḥāq summarizes his message in the following way: «A bird builds its

[27] *Ibid.*, II, p. 338.
[28] VÖÖBUS, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient* II, p. 122, 172, 174f., 225, 240.
[29] *Sop'erk' haykakank'* VI, p. 19f.
[30] *Opera omnia* II, p. 288.
[31] *Ibid.*, I, p. 186, 188, 238.

nest and dwelling (in it) according to the measure of its body; only barely does it enter its dwelling — it must stoop and draw in its little head; the opening, however, cannot be too large so that a hawk would not intrude and rob the young ones; imitate it and do not try to enlarge your dwelling in this world so that a hawk will not intrude and destroy your faith»[32]. In sum, his most urgent warning, his most passionate appeal to his monastic reders is found in this assertion: «Thus a monk who lifts up the door of his cell, seeks his own perdition»[33].

As a source of encouragement to, and inspiration for, perseverance on the hard road of privation, poverty and self-denial, Isḥāq describes the glory of their function from the angle of the total universe. They embody a role which is irreplaceable. He portrays that great outlook according to which through their prayers they have become protectors of the entire human race, of its existence and preservation. That should give them new courage and strength not to succumb in their struggles. Such a perspective is summarized by his statement: «Through your prayers you are the protectors of the entire human race. You are also a wall, as an outer force that surrounds us; take care that you no not succumb and thus give the (entire) world to plunderings of the evil and its armies; when you do not become slack, the world rests in peace but when you give up the world, then captivity will make the countries into a desert»[34].

c. *Other Outstanding* Mēmrē

Another *mēmrā* devoted to the monastic movement bears the title[1]: «A *mēmrā* about avidity that disturbs the brothers»[2]. With the passage of centuries, the manuscript tradition has become divided. Some manus-

[32] ܒܡܫܘܚܬܗ ܗܘ ܕܦܪܚܬܐ. ܐܬܒܩܘ, ܡܢܘ ܥܒܕܐ ܒܗ ܩܢܐ ܥܡܪܐ ܘܡܫܟܢܐ. ܐܟܠܐ ܠܡܥܡܪܗ ܒܐܘܠܨܢܐ. ܕܠܐ ܢܗܘܐ ܐܬܪܐ ܠܒܪܐ. ܕܢܚܘܬ ܢܚܢܝ ܦܩܕܗ. ܚܙܝ ܗܢܘ ܟܐܘܠܨܢܐ. ܕܢܚܙܐ ܠܦܘܡܗ ܠܐ ܢܦܘܩ. ܬܐܠܨܐ ܠܗ ܘܠܐ ܬܪܘܚ ܥܡܪܟ ܒܐܪܥܐ ܕܦܘܪܣܬܗ ܕܠܐ ܬܥܠ ܠܗ ܡܚܘܬܐ. ܘܬܬܚܒܠ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܟ, *ibid.*, II, p. $328_{1540-1550}$.

[33] *Ibid.*, II, p. 330.

[34] ܢܛܘܪܐ ܐܢܬܘܢ ܒܨܠܘܬܐ. ܕܟܠܗ ܐܢܫܘܬܐ. ܐܢܬܘܢ ܐܢܘܢ ܐܦ ܫܘܪܐ. ܒܪܝܐ ܕܚܕܪ ܠܢ. ܠܐ ܬܬܡܣܝܢ ܘܬܬܠܠܘܢ ܐܪܥܐ. ܠܒܙܬܐ ܕܒܝܫܐ ܘܕܚܝܠܘܬܗ. ܐܢ ܐܢܬܘܢ ܠܐ ܬܪܦܘܢ. ܒܫܝܢܐ ܫܠܝܐ ܬܒܝܠ. ܘܐܢ ܐܢܬܘܢ ܫܒܩܝܢ ܐܪܥܐ. ܫܒܝܐ ܡܚܪܒ ܐܪܥܬܐ, *ibid.*, II, 294_{1030}; 296_{1059}.

[1] ܕܥܠ ܡܘܬܪܬܐ ܕܫܓܫܐ ܠܐܚܐ.

[2] Its *incipit* reads: ܐܠܗܐ ܪܚܡ ܫܠܡܬܐ.

cripts have ascribed it to 'Aphrēm[3], but they do so wrongly[4]; others have ascribed it to Isḥāq of Antioch[5]. Thus, on the one hand, the text has been included among the works of 'Aphrēm in the edition of Lamy[6]; whereas on the other hand, the *mēmrā* appears as one of Isḥāq's works in the corpus edited by Bedjan[7].

The historical background of the monastic movement is so clear that nothing remains to be desired. The phase of development that confronts us here has already grown out of the primitive form of monastic life rooted in the mountains and deserts. As a result, this advancement had produced a monasticism of a different type. The monks have exchanged the cliffs and gorges for monasteries. It is coenobitism in its developed form that emerges in very colorful pictures on the pages of this treatise. The inmates of these monastic communities are called *rabbānē*[8].

The coenobitic development also reveals features on its face that unmistakably betray the fact that the institution had already undergone a certain history. A period of time must already have elapsed in order for the monastic establishments to have grown so large and extensive. This in turn had caused a transformation in the monastic institution itself insofar as it wholeheartedly trusted the new trends. The former primitiveness of life had made room for organization and for the necessary arrangements in the interest of maintaining these large monastic communities. The document shows just how much the development had gone when it portrays the new silhouette of the monastic scenery for its readers. We see before us monasteries with orchards, gardens, plantations, fields, vineyards and facilities for herds. For Isḥāq this picture is decidedly unnerving. He holds up his hands in horror when he cries out: «Behold, there are plantations on the rocks, and on the tops (of hills) vegetables, grainaries between the mountains, and behold — piles of wheat between the rocks; behold — buildings in the desert, and behold

[3] A codex in Mossul used in *Hymni et sermones*, ed. LAMY IV, col. 141f.

[4] VÖÖBUS, *Literary-Critical and Historical Studies*, p. 88f.

[5] Ms. Vatican Syr. 119, fol. 11aff., ASSEMANI, *Catalogus* III, p. 115; regarding other manuscripts see VÖÖBUS, *Literary-Critical and Historical Studies*, p. 88.

[6] *Hymni et sermones*, ed. LAMY IV, col. 225ff.

[7] *Homiliae*, ed. BEDJAN I, p. 36ff. Exploration in the Syrian Orient has brought new sources to the light: Ms. 'Alqōš 246, fol. 15b-19a; Ms. 'Alqōš 247, quire 10, p. 16ff.; Ms. Baghdad Patr. 6033, p. 177-186; Ms. Monastery of Gīwargī without signature, a codex with cardboard covers 22 × 16cm, fol. 41a-45a; Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 218, fol. 13a-15a; Ms. Mardin 74, fol. 14a-19b; Ms. Mardin Orth. 75; Ms. Mardin Orth. 143, fol. 30a-39b; Ms. Mardin Orth. 155, p. 266-285; Ms. Mardin Orth. 446, quire 15, fol. 2a - quire 16, fol. 4a; regarding the manuscripts in Mardin, see VÖÖBUS, *Syriac Manuscripts*.

[8] *Hymni et sermones*, ed. LAMY IV, col. 237.

— possessions in the wilderness»[9]. That all this is only an outward expression of a constantly increasing new factor in the monastic development — i.e., physical work — is self-evident. That is what troubles the heart of the author of the *mēmrā*[10]. He is thoroughly agitated at the sight of monks seizing plows with such energy that it threatens to kill monastic life itself[11]. The extent of Isḥāq's concern is also reflected in his repeated and most urgent appeals to his monastic readers. Using the power of his persuasion, he tries to win the monk back to the lost ideal — once again to abandon work, money and possessions, and to return to the ideal of poverty[12]. He cannot, however, conceal his feelings of resignation — the negative phenomena have penetrated monasticism too deeply.

Another text bears the title[13]: «A *mēmrā* about a refutation against the brothers»[14]. It is very similar to the *mēmrā* described. It unfolds the same situation in the stream of transmission as does the preceding one. According to some manuscripts, the treatise is ascribed to ʾAphrēm[15], according to others it is from Isḥāq's pen[16]. The same rift appears throughout the edition of the text. In the edition of Lamy, it appears as a work of ʾAphrēm[17] but in that of Bedjan, it has found its place in the corpus of the works of Isḥāq of Antioch[18]. Exploration in the Syrian Orient has brought many new and unknown sources to the light[19].

[9] ܗܐ ܬܐܓܪ̈ܬܐ ܒܡܣܒܢܘܬܐ : ܘܙܒܢܘܬܐ. ܐܕ̈ܪܐ ܩܢܝܬ ܠܛܘ̈ܪܐ ܘܗܘܐ ܙܪ̈ܘܥܬܐ ܥܠ ܡܕܒܪܐ ܙܒܢ̈ܐ ⁘ ܗܐ ܒܫܢ̈ܝܐ ܟܠܗ ܕܒܪܐ : ܘܗܐ ܡܫܢ̈ܝܐ ܟܠܗ ܡܕܒܪܐ. *ibid.*, col. 229.

[10] Isḥāq says with bitter sarcasm that land and sea are not enough for the mercantile spirit — it has also invaded the deserts, *ibid.*, col. 229.

[11] *Ibid.*, col. 229, 237.

[12] *Ibid.*, col. 237.

[13] ܡܐܡܪܐ ܕܡܟܣܢܘܬܐ ܠܘܩܒܠ ܐܚ̈ܐ.

[14] Its *incipit* runs: ܐܘܗ ܕܡܟܣܝܢ ܙܕܩܐ.

[15] A codex in Mosul used in *Hymni et sermones*, ed. LAMY IV, col. 141; Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 17,262, fol. 213bff., WRIGHT, *Catalogue* II, p. 867ff.

[16] Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 12,166, fol. 95aff. which comes from the 6th cent., see WRIGHT, *Catalogue* II, p. 674ff.; about other manuscripts see VÖÖBUS, *Literary-Critical and Historical Studies*, p. 90.

[17] *Hymni et sermones*, ed. LAMY IV, col. 241ff.

[18] *Homiliae*, ed. BEDJAN I, p. 13ff.

[19] Ms. ʾAlqōš 246, fol. 6b-11a; Ms. ʾAlqōš 247, quire 11, p. 5-17; Ms. Baghdad Patr. 6033, p. 186-198; Ms. Monastery of Gīwargī which has no signature has cardboard covers and its measurements are 22 × 16cm., fol. 45a-51b; Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 30, fol. 152a-159a; Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 218, fol. 4b-7b; Ms. Mardin Orth. 74, fol. 45a-51b; Ms. Mardin Orth. 143a, fol. 140a-152b; concerning the manuscripts in Mardin, see VÖÖBUS, *Syriac Manuscripts*.

Much that has already been said about the preceding treatise is valid also for this text. Both have so much in common that they can be considered as kindred texts.

That which has already been observed about the developed phase in the history of monasticism, is mirrored in this *mēmrā*. It tells us that an enormous growth in the monastic establishments had occurred[20]. Buildings, plantations and gardens had been created and cultivated to such a degree that our author had become deeply annoyed by the zeal of these undertakings[21] which even ignited competition[22].

The negative results of this evolution are depicted in the same fashion as in the preceding treatise. The work and the amount of energy which the maintenance of these extended and large monastic communities demanded, unfold the degree of degeneration that had taken place[23]. The author has become acutely critical of all this, and holds that it has become a decadent epoch inspired by greediness and avidity[24]. He brings all the gravamina together in evidence against this period of decline, this deterioration produced during this most recent phase in coenobitism[25].

It is the intention of this *mēmrā* to muster the strength of its ascetic readers in order to build a bulwark of resistance against the undulation of such dangerous phenomena. It reaches its culmination in an urgent appeal to the monks to renounce the plow together with all these transactions and items of business[26] and to return to the time-honored ideal of poverty[27].

d. *Other Related Sources*

Isḥāq's monastic thought, which in its basic features has been already delineated, also appears with variations in a number of other sources. Indeed, there is even a cycle of such which has been incorporated in the vademecum of Syrian monks and ascetics who have made use of its services for the propagation of the same basic ideas.

[20] *Hymni et sermones*, ed. LAMY IV, col. 257.

[21] *Ibid.*, col. 253.

[22] *Ibid.*, col. 251, 253.

[23] *Ibid.*, col. 255, 257.

[24] His verdict is: ܗܐ ܡܬܚܫܒܝܢ ܙܟܝ̈ܐ : ܕܐܝܟܢ ܢܗܘܘܢ ܐܣܘ̈ܛܐ «behold, the victorious ones are planning how they may become luxurious», *ibid.*, col. 253, cf. col. 259.

[25] *Ibid.*, col. 243.

[26] *Ibid.*, col. 261.

[27] *Ibid.*, col. 241, 243, 251, 255.

The first bears the title[1]: «One solitaries and the monks and refutation»[2]. The text of this *mēmrā* has been edited by Bedjan[3]. The manuscript tradition of this *mēmrā* has been greatly enriched by new and unknown sources[4].

The second *mēmrā* carries the title[5] «On the perfection of the brothers»[6]. The text has been edited by Bedjan who has incorporated this *mēmrā* into the corpus of the writings of Isḥāq of Antioch[7]. The manuscript tradition of this *mēmrā*, too, has been enriched by new discoveries[8].

This little cycle is still enriched by another small circle of *mēmrē* dedicated to the *ḥabīšē*[9], that is, the reclusi[10]. These *mēmrē* are devoted to a eulogy of the self-denial and devotion which this particular group of ascetics embody in their permanent confinement and quietness. These *mēmrē* bear the title[11] «On the recluse-brothers»[12]. This cycle is comprised of eight such *mēmrē*. They are arranged in a special way and enumerated as a fixed cycle reflecting Isḥāq's particular affection for this form of ascetic life.

These texts have been edited by Bedjan[13]. New sources on this cycle have come to light[14].

All of these *mēmrē* rejoice in the halo that surrounds the reclusi in their cells living in confinement, solitariness and quietness. Isḥāq holds their

[1] ܥܠ ܝܚܝܕܝܐ ܘܐܝܟܐ ܕܝܪܝܐ ܘܡܟܣܢܘܬܐ.

[2] Its *incipit* reads: ܐܠܗܐ ܡܫܟ ܒܪܟ.

[3] *Homiliae* I, p. 81ff.

[4] Ms. ʾAlqōš 246, fol. 33b-43b; Ms. Jerusalem Mark 166, quire 14, fol. 9aff.; Ms. Mardin Orth. 74, fol. 32b-45a; Ms. Mardin Orth. 143a, fol. 118a-140a; about the manuscripts in Mardin, see VÖÖBUS, *Syriac Manuscripts*; Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 162, p. 241-267; Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 218, fol. 61a-77b.

[5] ܥܠ ܓܡܝܪܘܬܐ ܕܐܚܐ.

[6] Its *incipit* reads: ܡܘܬܒܐ ܒܐܚܐ ܪܚܡ ܐܚܘܢ.

[7] *Homiliae* I, p. 296ff.

[8] Ms. Jerusalem Mark 198, p. 355ff.; Ms. Mosul Orth. 241, fol. 58a-63a; Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 218, fol. 10b-12b.

[9] ܚܒܝܫܐ.

[10] Abut this particular form of Syrian asceticism, see also PEÑA-CASTELLANA-FERNANDEZ, *Les reclus syriens*, p. 47ff.

[11] ܥܠ ܐܚܐ ܚܒܝܫܐ.

[12] The *incipit* of the first *mēmrā* reads: ܠܐܚܐ ܕܟܠ ܦܘܪܫܢ.

[13] *Homiliae* I, p. 468ff., 476ff., 492ff., 502ff., 513ff., 520ff., 531ff.

[14] Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 218, fol. 75a-91a.

splendid example over the heads of those monks who cannot stay in one place quietly but have to roam from monastery to monastery[15]. Isḥāq paints a picture of real spiritual heroes who have chosen reclusion, loneliness and quietness and cannot be affected by those who wander about, thus denying a form of life which is infinitely higher[16].

We must reckon with the possibility that the *mēmrē* just presented and others to be presented in the following section may include some which do not come from Isḥāq's pen. That the inspiration which Isḥāq poured into his *mēmrē*, aiming at the reformation of the monastic movement, may have inspired unknown writers to imitate them, namely, writers who shared the same convictions with Isḥāq, is as predictable as it is natural. A literary-critical examination is needed but that is a special undertaking which cannot be attempted here.

e. *Additional Sources*

The material similar in content and bearing the name of Isḥāq is still larger. Our search in the Syrian Orient has been very rewarding and unknown manuscript sources have been brought into the light. That is, there has been an unexpected enrichment of sources to study the monastic thought of Isḥāq.

In the first place, a *mēmrā* must be introduced which in the course of manuscript transmission has been variously titled. In some of the manuscripts it figures under the title «On the solitaries»; in others «On the monks» and also «On the perfection of the brothers»[1]. The newly discovered sources coming from the Syrian Orient surprise us by their richness[2]. This material reflects the popularity of this *mēmrā* and its place in the reading material available to monastic readers.

[15] *Homiliae* I, p. 473.

[16] *Ibid.*, I, p. 514.

[1] Its *incipit* reads: ܠܗܘܢ ܚܒܝܒܝ ܕܒܢܐ ܐܬܐ ܠܡܪܐ.

[2] Ms. Aleppo Orth. 102; Ms. Diyarbekir Başaranlar 51, quire 16, fol. 7a-18, fol. 3a; Ms. Jerusalem Mark 162, p. 488-497; Ms. Mardin Orth. 143a, fol. 1b-20a; Ms. Mardin Orth. 155, p. 9aff.; Ms. Mardin Orth. 417, fol. 18aff.; Ms. Mardin Orth. 418, fol. 193a-207a; Ms. Mardin Orth. 446, quire 14, fol. 3a-7b; about the manuscripts in Mardin, see VÖÖBUS, *Syriac Manuscripts*; Ms. Mosul Orth. 146, p. 1ff.; Ms. Mosul Orth. 241, fol. 40b-48b; Ms. Qarṭāmīn which has no signature but this middle sized codex begins with the writings of Isḥāq of Ninive; this *mēmrā* appears as nr. 19 in this collection.

The next *mēmrā* to be introduced bears the title: «On privation»[3]. Here, too, new sources have come to our disposal[4].

The third *mēmrā* to be introduced has been variously recorded in manuscript sources. The variation appears between the title «On monks» and «On perfection»[5]. Most of the time it appears among the works of Isḥāq but occasionally it also bears 'Aphrēm's name. Also here do we welcome the enrichment that has come from unknown manuscript sources[6].

Another *mēmrā* bears the title: «On the admonition of the solitaries»[7] but in some manuscripts the title has been simplified: «On monks». In some manuscripts the *mēmrā* appears under the wrong flag bearing the name od 'Aphrēm. For the transmission of the text of this *mēmrā*, newly discovered sources make important contributions[8].

There is still another *mēmrā* bearing the title «On monks»[9] and with a slight variation of the title in other manuscripts. The number of witnesses to the text has been increased by the discovery of unknown sources[10].

The last *mēmrā* to be introduced also differs in title. Some manuscripts read «On perfection» but others «On perfection and privation»[11]. For the transmission of the text, newly discovered sources render a valuable contribution[12].

[3] Its *incipit* reads: ܡܪ̈ܝ ܠܟܢܫܐ ܩܪ̈ܝܐ ܥܠ.

[4] Ms. 'Alqōš 246, fol. 54b-58a; Ms. Mardin Orth. 143a, fol. 20a-30a; about these manuscripts, see VÖÖBUS, *Syriac Manuscripts*; Ms. Mosul Orth. 146, p. 22ff.; Ms.Šarfeh Patr. 218, fol. 96b-99a.

[5] Its *incipit* reads: ܫܡ̈ܥܐ ܕܡܫܬܠܡ ܥܡܘܕܗ.

[6] Ms. Jerusalem Mark 284, fol. 20b-33b; Ms. Mardin Orth. 74, fol. 90b-99a; Ms. Mardin Orth. 75, fol. 34aff.; Ms. Mardin Orth. 140, p. 272-291; Ms. Mardin Orth. 157, fol. 77b-87a; Ms. Mardin Orth. 169, fol. 187a-188b; Ms. Mardin Orth. 446, quire 13, fol. 3a - quire 14, fol. 3a; about these manuscripts in Mardin, see VÖÖBUS, *Syriac Manuscripts*; Ms. Midyat Gülçe 9, quire 8, fol. 9a-9b.

[7] Its *incipit* reads: ܐܚ̈ܝ ܫܡܥܘ.

[8] Ms. 'Alqōš 253, quire 17, p. 10-16; Ms. Baghdad Patr. 3122, p. 306-314; Ms. Baghdad Patr. 6023, p. 229-235; Ms. Mardin Orth. 142, p. 50-55, see VÖÖBUS, *Syriac Manuscripts*; Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 30, fol. 140a-152a.

[9] Its *incipit* reads: ܫܠܝܬ ܡܢ ܘܐܠܗ ܡܢ ܟܠ.

[10] Ms. Diyarbekir Başaranlar 19, fol. 148a-150a; Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 30, fol. 159a-161b; Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 218, fol. 89b-91a.

[11] Its *incipit* reads: ܫܘܡܠܝ ܠܟ ܬܪܥܐ ܐܚܝܢܐ.

[12] Ms. 'Alqōš 246, fol. 101a-104a; Ms. Mardin Orth. 74, fol. 1b-14a; Ms. Mardin Orth. 143a, fol. 157a-157b; about these manuscripts in Mardin, see VÖÖBUS, *Syriac Manuscripts*; Ms. Mosul Orth. 146, p. 164ff.

2. The Writings under the Name of Jōḥannān the Solitary

a. *The Sources*

The oldest witnesses to these materials in the Syriac manuscript tradition identify the writer as Jōḥannān *iḥīdāyā*, «the solitary». But these sources are beset by very complicated problems.

Hausherr, in the year 1935, raised this question when he called attention to a very urgent task in this field of study: «C'est du reste un des *desiderata* les plus urgents de l'histoire de la mystique»[1]. The publication of three letters by Jōḥannān the Solitary[2] was hailed as an event which brought a great spiritual author out of the realm of oblivion[3]. Indeed, it was a significant event for it inaugurated interest in works bearing the name of Jōḥannān the Solitary, and soon other works began to appear. A dialogue about the soul and the affects of men[4] came out but under the name of Johannes of Lycopolis[5]. A cycle of three treatises soon followed[6], and then, after a longer interval, the conversations with Thomasios, both letters and treatises[7]. Finally also his tract on prayer[8]. Since in a letter under his name edited by Rignell[9], there emerged a quotation in which Bābai is introduced as a text of Jōḥannān *iḥīdāyā* from Apamea[10], it has become customary to regard this as sufficient reason to declare the author of all these writings to be Jōḥannān of Apamea.

A glance at the oldest attainable collections of the writings preserved under the name of Jōḥannān the Solitary reveal the perplexity of the problems in the transmission of these textual materials. A glance at this must be taken before our discussion moves on.

The oldest collection of these writings appears in a codex which is very old, a venerable document written in the year 581[11]. This most ancient

[1] HAUSHERR, «Le messalianisme», p. 635.

[2] *Briefe*, ed. RIGNELL.

[3] HAUHERR, «Un grand auteur spirituel retrouvé», p. 3ff.

[4] *Ein Dialog*, ed. DEDERING. A French translation was prepared by Hausherr, «Jean le solitaire - Pseudo Jean de Lycopolis».

[5] Hausherr showed that the author of the dialogue was not Johannes of Lycopolis but a Syrian, namely Jōḥannān the Solitary. «Un grand auteur spirituel retrouvé», p. 3ff.

[6] *Drei Traktate*, ed. RIGNELL.

[7] *Johannes von Apamea*, ed. STROTHMANN.

[8] «John the Solitary on Prayer», ed. BROCK, p. 84ff.

[9] *Briefe*, ed. RIGNELL, p. 19.

[10] *Evagrios Ponticus*, ed. FRANKENBERG, p. 135.

[11] Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 17,169, WRIGHT, *Catalogue* II, p. 451ff.

collection is comprised of nine works which come into account. It starts whith a cycle of four conversations with Eutropios and Eusebios, brings the first letter to Theodoulos and then the first letter to Eutropios and Eusebios. It also includes very disparate texts, consisting of an exegetical piece[12], of two tracts[13] and two letters each to a monastery — documents which have been preserved only in this source[14].

The next ancient collection, about a century younger, comprises altogether seven writings, but the material represented here is multi-hued: it presents an exegetical piece[16], a treatise[17], materials under a wrong flag[18], a letter[19], followed by a collection of sentences[20], and concluded by a commentary on Job. The second part of the codex[21] which is of the ninth century offers two more writings though both of these have been wrongly ascribed to Jōḥannān[22].

The third ancient collection comes from a manuscript written in the year 774/5[23] and contains altogether eighteen writings which come into account. The first six bear the namely two treatises[24], a conversation between a teacher and his pupils, exegetical pieces[25], four treatises[26], and a letter[27]. Another letter[28] follows, leading to a cycle of writings clustered around Thomasios, namely a letter and three treatises sent to Thomasios «On the order of salvation of Christ», and a letter to

[12] Exegesis on Mt. V,4.

[13] «On pride and arrogance», and another treatise without title but on the same subject.

[14] The first to the monastery of recluses «On peace» and «On love» sent to another monastery. There is also a tract on the subject why the good are afflicted.

[15] Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 18,814, WRIGHT, *Catalogue* II, p. 734ff.

[16] The same exegetical piece on Mt. V,4.

[17] «On the health of the soul».

[18] Two discourses but they have been wrongly included here since they were taken from the *Liber graduum*, as this is correctly stated by a later hand at the margin.

[19] A letter sent to Hesukios.

[20] Namely the first cycle.

[21] Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 18,814, WRIGHT, *Catalogue* II, p. 798ff.

[22] «On four virtues» has been wrongly inserted here because it is a homily by Monk Isaiah. The same is the case with the second text «Be watchful», as this is nothing else than an excerpt taken from the *Liber graduum* and the *Historia monachorum*, see STROTHMANN, *Johannes von Apamea*, p. 41.

[23] Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 17,170, WRIGHT, *Catalogue* II, p. 454ff.

[24] «The new world», namely the second treatise, and «The fulfillment of the promises in the future and the new life».

[25] Exegesis on Mt. V,3; V,9, V,8; Rom. VIII,18; Eph. VI,12.

[26] «Exhortation to love», «Rules and orders», «Exhortation to virtue», «Conciliatory address to those who are persecuted for the sake of the Messiah».

[27] Sent to Marcianus.

[28] Sent to Hesukios.

Thomasios. A doxology concludes this collection. A subscription, however, admits that this volume containing the works of Jōḥannān the Solitary, also includes some writings from other authors[29].

The most extensive collection of writings under the name of Jōḥannān the Solitary has been preserved in a codex which comes from the eighth or the ninth century[30]. This collection is introduced by an exegetical piece[31] followed by a letter[32] which is followed by a combination of treatises[33] and exegetical pieces[34]. Then comes the «Dialogue between a teacher and his disciple» and the first collection of the sentences, followed by three treatises[35] and a letter sent to Eubolos, the advocate[36]. Now comes a block of texts connected with Thomasios, namely six conversations, a letter written by Thomasios to Jōḥannān, a letter written by Jōḥannān to Thomasios, Jōḥannān's reply which he sent with two treatises «On the order of salvation», followed by the second letter to Eutropios and Eusebios. Then come two treatises «On the holy Trinity». Then two letters sent to Theodoulos[37] and a tract on the «Mysteries of baptism»[38] conclude this long collection.

The total legacy bearing the name of Jōḥannān, however, must have been larger for in his writings Jōḥannān refers to other works which he had composed but which have not survived.

The oldest collections give us an idea about the way different strata, the oldest and those of later origin, have grown together, become interlaced and intertwined in the various collections. No less variegated is the marking of the sources which appear under the name of Jōḥannān the Solitary, Mār Jōḥannān, often marked by an abbreviated note «the same» and also often without any name. This is the state of textual materials in which historical research has to find its way.

Fortunately, this corpus of material preserved in Syriac manuscripts can be augmented by unknown sources which our systematic search and

[29] Fol. 88a.

[30] Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 12,170, WRIGHT, *Catalogue* II, p. 746ff.

[31] Exegesis on Mt. V,3.

[32] Sent to Hesukios.

[33] «On victorious life and conduct» and two treatises titled, «On fast».

[34] Exegesis on Luke XVIII,11; John XVI,16 and Mt. XXVI,63.

[35] «On diligence in good actions», «Admonitions» and «On grace».

[36] «That God is incomprehensible».

[37] Namely the first and the second letter.

[38] The second collection of the sentences concludes this collection.

recovery program has elicited from their hiding places in the Syrian Orient[39].

b. *Jōḥannān's Charisma*

This time we have to do with very extraordinary material. Judging from the manuscript evidence, the writings bearing the name of Jōḥannān must have been celebrated as among the most important ascetic and mystical writings in Syriac. These writings exercise a special attraction of their own. First of all, the author whose face becomes visible from writings impresses us as an original thinker and author[1] The one who speaks here speaks with extraordinary authority as a pneumatic. Out of his sense of calling this solitary promulgated his mission from his cell as a spiritual advisor, counselor and charismatic teacher. His charisma must have prompted ascetics to go to see him in person. His fame reached them and they felt an irresistible desire to leave their cells and receive the benefits of his teachings from his own lips. Closer contacts were thus created with fellow solitaries, and after they returned to their cells they found new inspiration for their thoughts which impelled them to write to their spiritual leader in order to obtain further instruction and advice. Monks from the east who knew him brought news about him to others who were drawn to him and wished to sit at his feet[2]. His conversations with the disciples in general moved at a high level in the theological arena. Among the questions addressed were these: the economy of salvation, the problem why man was not created with an everlasting life, why man was created with a body to be finally transformed later on, revelations and visions of the order of divine salvation, the future hope and the metamorphosis of man in the coming life. The conversations also involve such different themes as the foundation of the world, salvation, the order of nature, the soul, the nature of demons and the hierarchy of angels. However, despite the variegation of the themes and the subjects discussed, the materials reveal the ultimate aim of this charismatic teacher — to guide his disciples to the realization of the importance of the new life and the knowledge of the new world.

[39] Among numerous manuscripts with monastic sources the most important is Ms. Mār Mattai 27.

[1] STROTHMANN, *Johannes von Apamea*, p. 62ff.

[2] The case of Thomasios can serve as an illustration. Although a solitary, he left his cell in Palestine and spent many days in undertaking the journey to reach the famous solitary and known him in person.

It has been felt by countless readers that this Jōḥannān the Solitary is a witness to the knowledge of the new world, a teacher of its glory, a proclaimer of the mysteries which have been revealed to him. Thus it is no wonder that he, as the leading spirit in the realm of spirituality, did not confine himself in these writings to doctrinal boundaries with the result that his works were welcomed and celebrated also by the East Syrians. The degree of their impact is demonstrated very eloquently in the manuscript tradition and in the quotations cited by East Syrian authors. These sources are telling. An ascetic author of the first rank is portrayed in these records. The judgement of Bābai, who theologically was not in the same camp, must be accorded particular importance. In the introduction of his great work, he makes a judgement about teachers in theology and asceticism and introduces the names of Evagrios, Jōḥannān the Solitary and Theodor of Mopsvestia[3]. Indeed, perhaps no greater honor could be conferred than by an eminent Nestorian author, one ranking Jōḥannān the Solitary among such liminaries. A very prominent figure who supports Jōḥannān is Dadīšōʿof Bēt Qaṭrāyē, an eminent ascetic author of the seventh century, who quotes him frequently[4]. He does the same, too, in his commentary[5] where he admires the teacher of asceticism as «a seer and prophet». He, too, comes from the Nestorian fold. Thus several eminent Nestorian authors have showered Jōḥannān with highest of honorific titles.

In Monophysite circles, Jōḥannān the Solitary is also deeply appreciated as the testimony of Mōšē bar Kēphā[6] and Dionysios bar Ṣalībī[7], and also Bar ʿEbrāyā attest[8]. The sources portray the author of these writings as a first-rank authority. There is, indeed, no other legacy in this genre which has had such dynamic power, so much so that it secured respect in both camps of Syrian Christianity and maintained its influence for a long time. The witness of history speaks loudly of the power of the charisma conveyed by these writings.

[3] *Evagrios Ponticus*, ed. FRANKENBERG, p. 17f.

[4] In his work «On the rest» he quotes the work of Jōḥannān to have written a treatise on the same subject, *Traktate*, ed. RIGNELL, p. 3ff. By the way, this writing was edited wrongly under the name of Isḥāq of Ninive, *De perfectione religosa*, p. 601ff. Under the correct name the treatise was edited in *Early Christian Mystics*, ed. MINGANA, p. 201ff.

[5] This commentary was composed on the writings of Monk Isaiah in Ms. Vatican Syr. 496. VAN LANTSCHOOT, *Inventaire*, p. 27. This manuscript goes back to Ms. Seert. 74, SCHER, *Catalogue des manuscrits syriaques de Séert*.

[6] He speak of Jōḥannān in his work on the paradise.

[7] *Commentarii in evangelia*, ed. VASCHALDE, p. 17ff.

[8] *Ethicon*, ed. BEDJAN, p. 271, 396.

c. *The Physiognomy of His Writings*

Coming to the writings themselves, the question of original language should not detain us long. Long ago it was noticed that Syriac was the original language of these writings[1]. The fact that no Greek works under the name of Jōḥannān the Solitary have appeared can scarcely be used as a basis for such a judgement. There is positive evidence that these writings were composed not in Greek[2] but in Syriac. On this matter in general there can be no doubt though caution in some cases may be necessary.. The thought patterns flow smoothly from Syriac traditions. The style also is characteristically Semitic. Observations which have been made about the linguistic side of these writings[3] suggest strongly that Syriac was the original language. This, of course, does not mean that we should overlook texts which, though put under the name of Jōḥannān the Solitary deserve reservation in this respect[4].

The literary physiognomy of this material is rather colorful. This is already the case in the genres which have been used. Its manifoldness appears in such different forms as conversations, discussions, discourses, didactic texts, treatises, tracts and letters. The pictures and imagery are drawn from the tradition. These writings, whose words and pictures are mainly drawn from the biblical traditions, are impressive. Seldom do these writings quote sources other than the Scriptures. But the fact that these writings reveal a quite extensive knowledge of medical science[5], is very conspicuous. It is not yet certain just how this predilection for medical imagery is properly to be understood. It has been felt that the tradition has preserved a satisfactory answer to this question[6]. However, in the face of such a phenomenon, one should not overlook the fact that it is not unique. Other Syrian authors in the same genre of spirituality have gained satisfaction through the use of medical imagery. This, too, is the case with ʾAphrahaṭ.

The colorful physiognomy of these writings is amplified by the

[1] ASSEMANI, *Bibliotheca orient.*, p. 431.
[2] How ʿAbdīšōʿ in his literary history could count him among the Greek authors is a riddle. See p. 50.
[3] STROTHMANN, *Johannes von Apamea*, p. 47ff.
[4] Regarding the third letter published by Rignell there are symptoms which cannot be easily overlooked. Here the author does not quote the Peshīṭtā nor the Syro-Hexapla but the text of the Septuagint. See VÖÖBUS, *Studies in the History of the Gospel Text in Syriac* I, p. 79.
[5] Theodoros bar Kōnī calls him even a medic, *Liber scholiorum*, ed. SCHER, p. 331.
[6] See page 101, 107f.

knowledge of Greek philosophy contained in them. It must be concluded that the author must have acquired this knowledge from his reading of the works of Greek authors[7]. On the other hand, it is important to observe that although these writings are acquainted with Greek philosophy[8] and surprise us with their medical terminology[9], these writings do not dwell on philosophical speculation and scientifically oriented arguments, but are animated from streams in the realm of biblical tradition, drawing their inspiration from the sacred Scriptures. That is, these writings stand far away from far-reaching speculations, reflecting an intellectual mode of treating spirituality. These materials leave the clear impression that they belong to the stream of ancient Syrian traditions of spirituality. The Greek philosophical way of thinking and scientific mystical spirituality as represented in the writings of Evagrios have not touched the currents which are flowing in these channels.

d. *Jōḥannān's Salient Ideas*

First of all, the life and death of Christ constitute fundamental ground. This event has had such an impact that it has brought salvation even to the world of the angels. Baptism[1] constitutes the gate[2] to the new life precisely because the one who receives baptism has already entered the sphere of new life[3]. Indeed, Jōḥannān the Solitary has written a special work on this entitled «On the Mystery of Baptism».

These writings follow the tradition of the three-fold scheme to describe the arduous road towards perfection: the corporeal, psychical and the spiritual. His conception for this scheme is this, that the bodily poverty means the privation of possessions; the psychic, freedom from hateful thoughts; and the spiritual, that signifies the richness of knowledge[4].

[7] This must be concluded from his disputations with the Greek philosophers about the problems of the Christian faith and from his use of philosophical arguments in discussing particular issues, and from the instructions he gave to his pupils regarding the attacks of the philosophers against Christianity.
[8] He mentions Epicur and Plato, *Johannes von Apamea*, ed. STROTHMANN, p. 7f.
[9] He quotes even a sentence of Hippocrates, «The world is short but the art is long», *Ein Dialog*, ed. DEDERING, p. 76. This sentence is only slightly different from the original Greek: ὁ μὲν βίος βραχύς, ἡ δὲ τέχνη μακρή, LUCIAN, *Hermotimos*, ed. JACOBITZ, p. 335, 375. This correct form of the sentence in Syriac appears in POGNON, *Une version syriaque des aphorismes d'Hippocrate*, I, p. 4; II, p. 1: ܚܝ̈ܐ ܟܪܝܢ ܘܐܘܡܢܘܬܐ ܐܪܝܟܬܐ.

[1] *Drei Traktate*, ed. RIGNELL, p. 13-24.
[2] ܬܪܥܐ.
[3] *Briefe*, ed. RIGNELL, p. 16, cf. p. 12.
[4] *Ein Dialog*, ed. DEDERING, p. 85.

Thus the two first stages belong to the realm of this world. Hard as it is to move from the corporeal stage to the psychic, an exercise demanding great effort on the road to fulfilling the commandments, it is harder still to reach the third stage, that of «the new life», «the new world», and as such «the mystery with God».

In describing this struggle and spiritual battle, something unique is exhibited in the thoughtworld. The tenor of the spiritual atmosphere is different than is to be seen elsewhere. In contrast to all other ascetic authors who usually deal very extensively with the struggles against the passions and temptations and who give ascetic instructions on the way to conduct the battle on this hard road, the attitude in these writings is in fact singular. The author's boldness in expression is sometimes stunning. It is stated that poverty does not mean perfection: «What shall we say about the many who think that they reach perfection through the privation from possessions?»[5]. In the same way do these writings speak of fasting[6]. A position which fosters not corporeal fasting but psychic and spiritual fasting, namely that of keeping oneself from evil passions and impure desires, is firmly taken up. The way in which these writings speak of ascetic practices is as singular as it is striking: «The love of God will be attained not through bodily, ascetic exercises, but through the understanding of His secrets»[7]. In another place the formulation is even stronger: «Asceticism is practiced not out of knowledge, but out of the heat of thinking»[8]. These writings even include such very drastic formulations as this: «Stupid people believe to attain knowledge through monks' scheme and scriptural reading»[9].

The entire spiritual orientation of these writings is unusual. It is independent, going its own way. Here the hope for the coming life is presented as a source of strength for overcoming the passions. For that person who lives in this hope, the passions have lost their power — because of the hope for the other world in Christ[10].

[5] *Briefe*, ed. RIGNELL, p. 64.
[6] *Ein Dialog*, ed. DEDERING, p. 80.
[7] ܚܘܒܐ ܓܝܪ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܠܐ ܡܢ ܥܡܠܐ ܦܓܪܢܝܐ ܡܬܩܢܐ: ܐܠܐ ܡܢ ܣܘܟܠܐ ܕܐܪ̈ܙܘܗܝ, *Ein Dialog*, ed. DEDERING, p. 19.
[8] ܥܡܠܗ ܠܐ ܡܢ ܝܕܥܬܐ ܗܘܝܘ. ܐܠܐ ܡܢ ܪܬܝܚܘܬܐ ܕܪܥܝܢܐ, *ibid.*, p. 57.
[9] ܘܣܒܪ ܐܢܫܐ ܣ̈ܟܠܐ ܒܬܠܡܝܕܘܬܐ ܕܐܣܟܝܡܐ ܘܒܩܪܝܢܐ ܕܟ̈ܬܒܐ ܣܒܪܘ ܠܡܕܪܟܘܗ̇ ܠܝܕܥܬܐ, *ibid.*, p. 77.
[10] *Briefe*, ed. RIGNELL, p. 56.

That which is unfolded in these writings represents a high degree of intense spiritual maturity. This can be more closely illustrated by using his thoughts on the prayer life as they appear in a special treatise bearing the title «On prayer». It first deals with vocal prayer. Instruction for intensive and interiorized prayer is given in connection with a prayer composed by Jōḥannān the Solitary for his correspondent. Unfortunately the prayer itself has not survived, a loss which is truly irreplaceable. But the author issues a warning against mere mechanical recitation: «But let your very self become the words[11], for there is no advantage in the reciting unless the Word actually becomes embodied in you and becomes a deed»[12].

This leads to far more important observations. Jōḥannān the Solitary presents two stages in prayer. One is the customary prayer, vocal and continuous. However, the author says that this is prayer at the stage which belongs to the «just». But for the higher stage, only spiritual prayer[13] is appropriate, prayer which is interior, silent prayer. This is the prayer for those who have moved on in their spiritual development and have become «spiritual beings»[14]. The above-mentioned treatise «On prayer» is devoted mainly to «the prayer of silence». Jōḥannān the Solitary also describes the nature of the «spiritual prayer»: «This spiritual prayer is more interior than the tongue, more deeply interiorized than anything on the lips ... when someone prays this kind of prayer he has sunk deeper than all speech, and he stands where spiritual beings and angels are to be found; like them, he utters 'holy' without any words»[15]. Thus the prayer of «spiritual beings» is ecstatic in character, since the solitary enters «the region of the angels» and joins the company of angels in their silent trisagion[16]. The attainment of the spiritual realm is distinguished from the stage of «purity»[17]. It is called the stage of «serenity»[18], — his preferred term for this elevated stage.

[11] «Manifesting themselves in you as deeds», Ms. Br. Mus. Or. 6714, «On Prayer», ed. BROCK, p. 95.
[12] *Ibid.*, p. 91, cf. p. 100.
[13] ܨܠܘܬܐ ܪܘܚܢܝܬܐ.
[14] *Ibid.*
[15] «On Prayer», ed. BROCK, p. 89, cf., p. 97.
[16] *Ibid.*, p. 89, cf. p. 97.
[17] ܕܟܝܘܬܐ.
[18] The Syrian term ܫܦܝܘܬܐ means «serenity», «transparency», «sincerity». It seems that the meaning «serenity» comes closest to the notion meant here. RÜCKER, *Aus dem mystischen Schriftum*, p. 41ff. translates the term «Lauterkeit» which means «purity», «clearness», «integrity», «sincerity».

These writings affirm that the solitary, though in this world, can already enter the new world reaching the spiritual stage: «For one can be outside the body while he is still in the body, and while the body still moves in the world, he can in his thinking be far from the world»[19]. This is one of the most vital features of his thinking; it is characteristic — the perfect ones can already participate while in this world in the state of imperishability.

It is important to identify the cornerstone for this firm conviction. It roots in a christological vision of the union between humanity and divinity in the person of Christ. That which belonged to Christ's human nature was not without his divine nature, and that which belonged to the divine nature, not without his human nature. This is the most vital deduction from the mystery of the incarnation as seen through Monophysite eyes. This is the doctrine which guarantees a realm of spirituality and the imperishability of the pneumatics.

It becomes clear in this thoughtworld, that eschatology stands at the very heart of its theological, spiritual and mystical thinking. Everything is strongly oriented towards eschatology as the ultimate pinnacle in the system of spirituality.

Given such a pneumatic vision, together with such a strong orientation towards eschatology, Jōḥannān the Solitary is led to unavoidable consequences — to ignore not only the world with all of its order and arrangements, but also to disregard institutions which have been held to be precious and sacred. With these premises, the author's estimate of the importance of the church is idiosyncratic. It departs from the position, for example, of the *Ketābā de-masqātā*[20] whose spiritual thoughtworld envisages the church according to a threefold schema[21], the church of the heart, the church of heaven, while reserving a place for the visible church[22]. Since the author is sure that he had reached the stage of the new life as a pneumatic, for him the church with its institutions and mysteries have no place any more — they have lost their value[23]. These no longer have any meaning. The true church, however, can neither be an institution nor something visible but consists only of the community of

[19] *Gespräche*, ed. STROTHMANN, p. 8f.
[20] See page 15-17.
[21] *Liber graduum*, ed. KMOSKO, col. 293ff.
[22] «If we despite this visible church ... then our body does not become a temple», p. 289.
[23] *Briefe*, ed. RIGNELL, p. 86.

God's household partaking in divine revelations. Even the priesthood falls under the same judgement[24]. Of course, the author admits that on earth one has fellowship with God through the holy mysteries which the church dispenses; however, he hastens to declare that in the new life no intermediation via the mysteries is necessary.

The elevatedness of the new life in the new world is so high above the church and everything related to it that theology and the issue of orthodoxy lose their meaning. That Jōḥannān the Solitary is consequent in his thinking, is demonstrated by his attitude towards heterodox ways in thinking and even towards heresy. He can declare boldly: «It is the strength of the soul that it does not resent heretical opinions and does not hate the heresies; moreover, if the soul hates them, then it is weak»[25]. This conviction is manifested also by his own personal attitude towards the heretical suspicions thrown against him. Since he taught a doctrine of two worlds, the danger to confusion with the Valentinians was very real. It is instructive to note that Jōḥannān the Solitary is content only with describing the difference between his theology and that of the Valentinian gnosis[26] but he avoids any argumentation and polemics.

Returning to the stage of the spiritual world, some concluding observations remain to be made. In his characteristic way, the author here employs the concept of «God as silence». This surprising conception in Jōḥannān's writings is not quite new since the thought of God as silence was known from gnostic sources[27]. His motivation, however, is that «God is silence»[28] and in silence is sung[29] by means of that psalmody which is worthy of Him[30]. This concept of «silence»[31] is

[24] While Jōḥannān the Solitary allocates all the concepts to the corporeal, psychic and spiritual spheres, it is very significant that there is no spiritual sphere for the priesthood.

[25] ܚܝܠܬܢܘܬܐ ܕܢܦܫܐ ܣܢܝܢ. ܗܢܐ ܗܝ ܕܟܕ ܫܡܥܐ ܡܚܫܒܬܐ ܕܗܪܣܝܣ ܠܐ ܬܬܚܡܬ ܘܠܐ ܬܣܢܐ ܠܗܪܣܝܣ. ܐܢ ܕܝܢ ܣܢܝܐ ܡܚܝܠܬܐ ܗܝ ܕܢܦܫܐ, *Ein Dialog*, ed. DEDERING, p. 91.

[26] «They represent many worlds but I am speaking only of two worlds», *Gespräche*, ed. STROTHMANN, p. 36.

[27] The earliest evidence appears in the Nag Hammadi sources, namely in the Gospel of the Egyptians II,2; IV,2, in the Valentinian Exposition of the Sacraments XI,2 and the Trimorphic Protennoia XIII,1.

[28] ܫܬܩܐ ܗܘ ܓܝܪ ܐܠܗܐ.

[29] «And glorified» in Ms. Br. Mus. Or. 6714, fol. 81b-83a, of the 9th cent.; «On Prayer», ed. BROCK, p. 92.
[30] *Ibid.*, p. 90.
[31] *Ibid.*

employed for the spiritual elatedness of the soul above everything earthly.

Jōḥannān provides an even closer insight into the mystical experiences meant by this concept. He describes the sequel of stages by which the solitary ascends this road. He describes five stages of silence: the silence of the tongue, the silence of the whole body, the silence of the soul, the silence of the mind, and finally, the silence of the spirit. The last one is the ultimate in silent prayer and adoration: «The silence of the spirit is when the mind ceases even from stirrings caused by created spiritual beings and all of its movements stirred solely by Being in wondrous awe of the silence which surrounds Being»[32]. This «wondrous awe» or «the wonder of silence»[33] is the culmination of perfection.

In this highest of stages, the solitary is prepared for ultimate illumination. He receives something which is far higher than ordinary knowledge: «This distinguishes itself from knowledge through the perception[34] of perfect wisdom, which is the perfection and light of knowledge, which means the seeing[35] of that one who was prophetically told, that he wanted to be visible to them who love him and follow his commandments»[36]. Whoever attains this last stage «receives divine revelation»[37] and «sees spiritual secrets»[38]. This is the ultimate and limitless illumination and the disclosure of mysteries designated by the concept of θεωρία to which the author adds the Syriac equivalent[39]. Obviously, as has already been observed[40], Jōḥannān understands this exalted condition as «the wondrous awe of silence» apparently understood in the same way as the experience is described by Isḥāq of Nineve when he speaks of the «cutting off» of prayer in ecstasy[41].

For fellowship with God in the new world, terms which convey intimacy[42] are used.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 91, cf. p. 99.
[33] *Ibid.*
[34] ܡܪܓܫܢܘܬܐ.
[35] Here not the later technical term ܬܐܘܪܝܐ but ܚܙܬܐ is employed.
[36] In his treatise «On rest», *Traktate*, ed. RIGNELL, p. 3.
[37] *Ein Dialog*, ed. DEDERING, p. 61.
[38] *Ibid.*, p. 68.
[39] *Traktate*, ed. RIGNELL, p. 22.
[40] Cf. KHALIFÉ-HACHEM, «La prière pure et la prière spirituelle», p. 157ff.
[41] *De perfectione religiosa*, ed. BEDJAN, p. 166, 490.
[42] One is ܒܝܬܝܘܬܐ, «being of the same household» and also «friendship», «intimacy»; the other term is ܫܘܬܦܘܬܐ, «fellowship», «communion».

Before leaving these observations, a retrospective look becomes necessary in order to grasp the sources for the dynamics which these writings exhale. Jōḥannān the Solitary speaks as a charismatic teacher, aware that he had personally received the gift of the higher knowledge of the new life and had received revelations[43] from God. Such a self-consciousness of being inspired through immediate illumination from God has given him the authority to speak of the new world with a personal assurance and a confident testimony which constitutes a firm position besides the Scriptures in his perspective. The author is firmly grounded in the ancient stream of charismatic thought in asceticism.

e. *Identification of Jōḥannān*

Concerning the circumstances of the life of this Jōḥannān the Solitary very little can be said. There is a lack of reliable information. Very complicated problems regarding the identity of the author enshroud the question of this personality and they have a longer history behind them. Cureton, several generations ago, asserted that Jōḥannān the Solitary must be identified with Johannes of Lycopolis[1]. This opinion endured for a long time until it was rejected by Hausherr[2]. Gradually literary critical work has clarified certain question which had created confusion[3]. A certain relief was felt when Jōḥannān of Apamea was rescued from the pages of the commentary of Bābai as we have already seen. Since then, it has been felt that the problem of identity has been advanced; it has become customary to speak of the author as Jōḥannān of Apamea.

This sense of relief, however, is deceptive. It did not mean that a way out of the conundrum had been found. Tradition has been more confusing than helpful. According to it, Jōḥannān of Apamea went to Alexandria, learned there medicine and logic and then returned to the

[43] His disciple Thomasios mentions in his discussions the hymns composed by Jōḥannān the Solitary, and that reading them he became convinced that Jōḥannān must have received particular revelations. This was the main reason which compelled him to undertake his journey from his cell in Palestine to visit Jōḥannān. *Briefe, des Thomasios*, ed. STROTHMANN.
[1] *Corpus Ignatianum*, p. 351.
[2] HAUSHERR, «Les débuts de la littérature mystique syriaque», p. 348f.; «Aux origines de la mystique syrienne», p. 497ff.
[3] Hausherr showed that the sentences which were published by WENSINCK, *New Data Concerning Syriac Mystic Literature*, p. 1ff., do not stem from Jōḥannān of Apamea, «Les débuts de la littérature mystique syriaque», p. 348f.

area of Apamea[4]. He then became deeply involved in heretical doctrines. Whether this Jōḥannān of Apamea is the same person as Jōḥannān the Solitary, is, indeed, difficult to say[5]. According to a solid tradition, Jōḥannān of Apamea was condemned because of his heretical views at the synod held under Catholicos Timotheos I. This took place because of his teaching about the seeing of God. This condemnation also involved other visionaries: Joseph Ḥazzāyā and Jōḥannān of Dalyātā[6]. Another source, however, comments that this action of condemnation was actually undertaken because of envy[7]. It would appear that there ought to be no problem in identifying the person of this Jōḥannān of Apamea with Jōḥannān the Solitary. However, serious complications come from the tradition that Jōḥannān of Apamea was the same heretic against whom Philoxenos fought, namely the companion of Stephen bar Ṣūdaylē. This claim causes serious complications and arouses suspicion[8]. In view of this confusing situation, it has been felt[9] that there were actually two persons, each carrying the name Jōḥannān, with both having lived in the area of Apamea[10]. It is readily understandable that scholars would look in this direction. In this connection a proposal was recently presented to reckon with no less than three different persons who carried the same name[11]. On the basis of all the traditions, it is inevitable that one would reckon with several persons behind Jōḥannān the Solitary. All the circumstances have created traditions, legitimate and illegitimate, which throughout the centuries have grown together in such a way that it may no longer be possible to separate them completely at

[4] There he entered the monastery of Mār Šemʿōn where he incited some monks to accept his heretical views. Theodoros bar Kōnī, *Liber scholiorum*, ed. SCHER, p. 331.

[5] Jōḥannān is introduced as a heretic involved deeply in all kinds of gnostic speculations and also docetic christology. The same charges have been repeated by Michael Syrus, *Chronique*, éd. CHABOT II, p. 250f., IV, p. 313. The same stories were taken over by Bar ʿEbrāyā, *Chronicon eccl.*, ed. ABBELOOS-LAMY I, col. 221ff. STROTHMANN, *Johannes von Apamea*, p. 97 tries to explain these charges so that Jōḥannān's teachings became the source for such exaggerated and corrupted deductions.

[6] See page 336.

[7] IŠOʿDENAḤ, *Le livre de la chasteté*, p. 64.

[8] This view has not found approval by everyone, HAUSHERR, «Jean le Solitaire», p. 24ff.

[9] CHABOT, «Éclaircissements sur quelques points de la litérature syriaque», p. 260ff.

[10] Baumstark reckoned with two persons, Jōḥannān of Apamea at Orontes and another Jōḥannān of Apamea in Mesopotamia, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, p. 166f., and p. 226.

[11] GUILLAUMONT, *Les Képhalaia Gnostica d'Évagre*, p. 269, 317 for the first Jōḥannān p. 317f. for the second, and p. 317 and 335 for the third Jōḥannān.

all. Once the tradition enmeshed him in heresy, sources began to flow with fabricated information in an uncontrolled development — that has always been the fate of those whom the heresiarchs have implicated. Not only has the disrepute of a heretic cast a cloud over the circumstances of the life of Jōḥannān the Solitary, but confusion with another homonyme or even a third has added to the conundrum.

While this conundrum will stay to trouble researchers, that should not diminish the great advantage of having these literary sources at our disposal, sources which had enjoyed an exceptional attraction and nourished countless minds in monasteries, cells and deserts. Everything presented in these materials outweighs by far all the depressing problems about the identity of the author or authors. It is encouraging that in this corpus of all kinds of texts, a kernel of writings, coherent in thought-world and theological orientation, begins to show its contours[12]. Such an analysis is the only way to give any hope in the effort to explore how many persons are hidden behind the name of Jōḥannān.

The most important facts lie elsewhere. The earliest manuscripts with writings of Jōḥannān the Solitary stem from the sixth century. This fact provides solid direction as to the time of composition. The evidence points to the fifth century. The rest of the information must come from intrinsic evidence itself as found in these writings.

At least one fact has a bearing on this question; it has to do with the vision of christology unfolded in these pages. Christology is presented at a point in time which reveals no polemical atmosphere at all. That which is presented here unfolds a time before the christological controversies arose. According to everything that can be ascertained indicates the second half of the fifth century is the time for the oldest stratum of all these materials. Stylistic considerations confirm these observations. Finally, these find additional support by phenomena drawn from the history of Syrian spirituality. There are strong indications that the place of Jōḥannān the Solitary in the ranks of most eminent ascetic authors must be one before the time of Philoxenos.

[12] The conversations and letters to Eutropios and Eusebios, ed. DEDERING, p. 1-27, 28-54, 55-79 and 80-93; *Briefe*, ed. RIGNELL, p. 40-82 and 83-120. Then two letters to Theodoulos, ed. RIGNELL, p. 3-39 and *Traktate*, ed. RIGNELL, p. 25-40; Six conversations with Thomasios and one letter, ed. STROTHMANN, and his reply in three treatises, also published by STROTHMANN, *Johannes von Apamea*, p. 56.

3. The Contribution of Jaʿqōb of Serūg

a. *The Monastic Thought in His Letters*

In tracing the monastic thought of Jaʿqōb of Serūg, it is advisable to concentrate on his writings in prose, that is, his letters. In that respect, a spiritual letter which treats the basic issues of ascetic life comes into account in the first place.

This first source at our disposal bears the title: «A letter to Paulā, the solitary»[1]. Another manuscript also includes the subject matter of the letter in the title: «To Paulā, on the flight from the world and from possessions»[2]. This source is one which presents us with quintessence of the ideas of ascetic wisdom and which has the purpose of providing practical advice; it is the aim of the letter to come to the aid[3] of the monk and to equip him in his fight against the internal enemies which rise to bedevil those who have embarked on the road of monasticism. The letter wants to encourage such persons to persevere in their ascetic struggles and to furnish incentives for advances in spiritual maturity. It is characteristic of Jaʿqōb, at the end of his letter, to refer to the fact that he has not written about such deep matters as a master to his disciple but rather as a lesser member to a more esteemed member in the family of those who strive towards higher spiritual goals[4].

Jaʿqōb begins with the initial stage on the road to ascetic virtues. This has to do with the very first stage of disciplehip[5], one which begins with the distribution of goods to the poor. It is the the first step, altogether necessary for anyone who chooses the path to a deeper religious life. This act does not and cannot make one perfect but it serves as an introduction to what is to come.

In order to produce the arguments in support of the perseverance required to follow this road, Jaʿqōb employs the traditional biblical imagery. ʾAphrēm[6] in his Letter to the Mountaineers[7] had used the

[1] ܐܓܪܬܐ ܠܦܘܠܐ ܝܚܝܕܝܐ. Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,587, Wright, *Catalogue* II, p. 517ff.

[2] ܠܘܬ ܦܘܠܐ ܥܠ ܥܪܘܩܝܐ ܡܢ ܥܠܡܐ ܘܡܢ ܩܢܝܢܐ Ms. Berlin Sachau 352. *Epistulae quotquot supersunt*, ed. Olinder, p. 42ff. Cf. Albert, «Une lettre spirituelle de Jacques de Saroug», p. 65ff.

[3] ܥܘܕܪܢܐ, *Epistulae*, ed. Olinder, p. 44_{23}.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. $45_{21\text{-}22}$.

[5] ܬܠܡܝܕܘܬܐ, *ibid.*, p. $43_{15\text{-}16}$.

[6] *Opera selecta*, ed. Overbeck, p. 126f.

[7] Vööbus, *A Letter of Ephrem to the Mountaineers.*

episode of Lot, of the Lot who despite the action of his wife, heeded the warning and did not turn around. Jaʿqōb draws upon the same typology when dealing with the episode of Sodom. The one who fled from Sodom but was still so attached to as to turn around became a statue of salt[8]; that one's heart was still bound by that land and so she perished. «(However) the wise Lot who went out from Sodom, as a perfect disciple, from an evil world, did not turn around because he knew Sodom»[9]. That was how Lot became a symbol of admonition for monks. This typology is all the more important for Jaʿqōb because it had been sanctioned by Jesus himself[10]: «Because of this our admirable teacher, Jesus Christ, has set a pattern[11], by (his example) of the departure of Lot and his wife, of the road of disciplehip»[12].

The second stage on the road to monasticism is as elevated as it is exalted. The ascetic person gradually moves into ever deeper realms. That which is involved here is the imitation of the life of Jesus: «For it is not from selling one's possession and giving (it) to the poor that one becomes perfect but from this (fact), that he goes after him»[13]. This theme of the imitation of the life of Christ occupies the central position in Jaʿqōb's ascetical spirituality[14].

The central idea of imitation leads to the theme of the cross: «For every soul which has sensed that God has been crucified for it, the marvel[15] of the cross moves[16] it and it shall not slip[17] and shall not be brought into subjection to the desires of a world full of all the evils»[18].

[8] Genesis XIX,26.

[9] [illegible]. *Epistulae*, p. $44_{18\text{-}21}$.

[10] Luke XVII,32.

[11] ܥܘܕܪܢܐ, «aid», «succour»; the variant reading offers ܥܘܗܕܢܐ «a memorial», see also Olinder, *The Letters of Jacob of Sarug*, p. 31.

[12] [illegible], *Epistulae*, p. $44_{23\text{-}25}$.

[13] ܠܐ ܓܝܪ ܡܢ ܗܝ ܕܡܙܒܢ ܐܢܫ ܩܢܝܢܗ ܘܝܗܒ ܠܡܣܟܢܐ ܗܘܐ ܓܡܝܪܐ. ܐܠܐ ܡܢ [illegible] ܗܝ, ܕܐܙܠ ܒܬܪܗ, *ibid.*, p. $44_{1\text{-}3}$.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 44.

[15] Lit.: «amazement».

[16] Or: «gives an impulse».

[17] Or: «becomes ensnared».

[18] [illegible], *ibid.*, p. $45_{17\text{-}19}$.

Those insights into the monastic thought of Jaʿqōb are driven to still deeper levels. Jaʿqōb now brings out his concern for «our interior man»[19]. This introspection is accompanied by deep religious insights. The unspeakable value of the interior man derives from a two-fold consideration: first, that God has created us according to His image[20] and that this image of God is imprinted upon the inner man, and, secondly, that the Unique One has come for the salvation of this image of God in the interior man.

Still more can be said about such spiritual introspection intended to deepen the spirituality of the interior man. Obviously Jaʿqōb does not visualize the ultimate aim of the ascetic life to consist of acts of mortification and of the physical ordeal imposed on the body but rather as a deepening of the internal life and of inner spiritual growth. After speaking of the first stage — the selling of goods and distributing them among the poor[21] — he continues: «But once he has become a disciple, this alone should not be required[22] but others, too, things greater, higher and more elevated than those — that is: if one is struck on his cheek, the other should be turned to him that beat him; again, one is to bless the one who curses him, to love the one who hates him, and to pray for him who does evil to him[23]»[24].

To depict such an advanced stage in the spiritual life, Jaʿqōb uses biblical terms[25] in order to show how the spiritual athlete becomes dead to the world and begins to live for God[26]. All facets of his light are concentrated on the bliss which spiritual growth is to produce as well as the superabundance of the inner life and the elevation of the soul enraptured in the realm of the spirit. This means a return to the life of innocence and a restoration of the soul to paradise in a mystical way. It is better to leave the description to Jaʿqōb himself: «For when he goes after

19 ܒܪܢܫܐ ܓܘܝܐ, *ibid.*, p. 42_{20}.
20 Genesis I,26.
21 Matth. XIX,21 and parall.
22 Or: «to give satisfaction».
23 Luke VI,27-29.
24 [Syriac text], *ibid.*, p. $43_{17\text{-}22}$.
25 Rom. VI,11.
26 *Epistulae*, p. 43f.

our Lord, he is transplanted into Eden, blessed of God, near the tree of life[27]; and such a one is in need of drinking from that blessed source which is divided in four directions in order to drink all of his days (from) these living waters»[28].

Another letter which comes into account in our pursuit, is titled: «A letter to Stephanos bar Ṣūdaylē». This letter was first edited by Frothingham[29] and then by Olinder[30].

The themes which have been discussed in connection with Jaʿqōb's previous letter also occur here and do not need to be repeated. Among new thoughts brought forward by Jaʿqōb in this document is this, the transitoriness, deceptiveness and the nothingness of the world: «But this troubled world is of grass, herb or flower: it is a shadow which recedes and hastens to pass away»[31]. Everything that the world exhibits in richness and beauty is no more than deceptive vision and illusion, like a dream from which one awakens only to realize that everything which had been seen was unreal. Such a realization must move those who have a «prudent soul»[32] «to rejoice in the beautiful light of day»[33].

A new idea appears, imagery which seems almost gnostic, the imagery of a great conflagration which embraces the entire world. Those with eyes to see recognize the danger and seek a way to be delivered from the fire. The dramatic flight of the ascetics is described in the following way: «For in the fiery passage, alms become a bridge to the givers of them and that person who has distributed his possessions among the needy easily passes over the gulf that is placed between the two sides»[34].

The example of Jesus as a pattern for monks is also forcefully depicted: «The great schoolmaster[35] descended from heaven and

27 Cf. Apoc, XXII,2.
28 [Syriac text], *Epistulae*, p. $44_{4\text{-}8}$.
29 *Stephen bar Sudhaili*, p. 10ff. Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,587, WRIGHT, *Catalogue* II, p. 517ff.
30 *Epistulae*, p. 2ff.
31 *Ibid.*, p. 2_{17}-3_{1}.
32 ܢܦܫܐ ܦܪܘܫܬܐ, *ibid.*, p. 3_{8}.
33 *Ibid.*, p. 3_{10}.
34 [Syriac text], *ibid.*, p. $5_{4\text{-}7}$.
35 Or: «teacher».

became the teacher to the world and the (whole) creation was illuminated by his teaching»[36]. Through his life, all the requisite instruction about privation, poverty and the withdrawal from the world has been given.

Finally Jaʿqōb describes the bliss awaiting those who have attained the highest level in the spiritual endeavor. Jaʿqōb holds before their eyes the picture of the bridal chamber, «the beautiful chamber»[37], which is to welcome all those who belong to the company of spiritual athletes.

The third letter which comes under scrutiny in our context is one which Jaʿqōb sent to the monks in the monastery of Mār Bass[38]. The letter was edited first by Paulin Martin[39] and later by Olinder[40].

Besides the themes already discussed, the notion of the *imitatio Christi* is more closely described; so we are thus allowed deeper insight into these experiences of Jaʿqōb. One passus brings out profundities not seen before: «If one is kindled and consumed by the fire of love, he denies himself, takes up his cross and goes after Christ; and as (Christ) proceeds before him in the ascents[41] of love, man departs from himself — and this is Christ who lives for him in him»[42].

A new theme is here developed, namely, the heavenly love which has descended to the earth and become manifest in the flesh. In this heavenly love, Jaʿqōb sees the real source for the higher spiritual impulses: «For this love has drawn you to go out from the world and (to be) confined[43] you in the monastery of the solitaries[44], that (love which) has conquered and bound (you) in love for the sake of the world»[45]. These insights are also given greater depth: «When he has entered and established himself in the realm[46] of love, he forgets his own interest, begins to constrain

[36] *Ibid.*, p. $4_{1\text{-}2}$.

[37] [Syriac text], *ibid.*, p. 4_{17}; more about the same imagery appears on p. 5_{22}-6_{17}.

[38] The monastery was located near Apamea.

[39] ZDMG (1876), p. 229ff.

[40] *Epistulae*, p. 1ff.

[41] Or: «steps», «degrees».

[42] [Syriac text], *ibid.*, p. $73_{23\text{-}27}$.

[43] Or: «enclosed».

[44] Or: «manner of life of the solitaries».

[45] [Syriac text], *ibid.*, p. $72_{26\text{-}28}$.

[46] Lit.: «place».

(himself so as) to be used for others; and when he is absorbed by the supreme love, he is seized[47] by a great sadness, an infinite pain and perpetual prayer»[48].

As we have seen, Jaʿqōb of Serūg's ascetic thoughtworld reflects the framework of ancient Syrian spirituality and its tenets, staying close to traditions drawn solely from scriptural sources. Nowhere do we notice any temptation to include something from a philosophy of spirituality. Indeed, Jaʿqōb pays not the slightest attention to such ideas.

In this connection, it is proper to remember that the tradition holds that Jaʿqōb either translated or interpreted Evagrios[49]. It must be admitted that suspicions[50] about the trustworthiness of this tradition must be taken very seriously. In any case, there is not the slightest trace of the ascetic philosophy of Evagrios in the writings of Jaʿqōb. And this surely deserves more trust than the aforementioned tradition.

b. Mēmrē *Fostering Monasticism*

It was advisable to study Jaʿqōb monastic thought in the light of his writings in prose. Here, monastic themes could be developed more or less fully, in this respect offering us better service than his poetic writings.

The writings which Jaʿqōb intended for the purpose of fostering monasticism belong to his literary legacy in the realm of poetry[1]. We are referring to the *mēmrā*[2] poetry[3] — a genre which he has cultivated in his own particular way[4]. One cycle has been devoted to the eulogy of the solitaries, ascetics and monks.

As far as the transmission of these *mēmrē* is concerned, they do not appear in the great collections of Jaʿqōb's *mēmrē*[5] nor in the giant

[47] Lit.: «he has».

[48] [Syriac text], *ibid.*, p. 73_{27}-74_{4}.

[49] BAR ʿEBRAYA, *Chronicon eccl.*, ed. ABBELOOS-LAMY I, p. 191, cf. LANDESDORFER, *Ausgewählte Schriften*, p. 252.

[50] Cf. BAUMSTARK, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, p. 148f.

[1] BAUMSTARK, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, p. 149ff.; CHABOT, *Littérature syriaque*, p. 62.

[2] HÖLSCHER, *Syrische Verskunst*, p. 34ff.

[3] VÖÖBUS, *Handschriftliche Überlieferung der Mēmrē-Dichtung* I, p. 17ff.

[4] MARTIN, *Métrique chez les Syriens*, p. 44.

[5] Ms. Vatican Syr. 118, ASSEMANI, *Catalogus* III, p. 107ff; Ms. Diyarbekir Mār Jaʿqōb 1/3; Ms. Chicago Oriental Institute A 12008; Ms. Mardin Orth. 130,131 and 132; Ms.

collections[6]. This is due to the fact that they were arranged for liturgical purposes. However, these *mēmrē* were widely circulated in collections of ascetic writings, manuals for monks and cycles of similar materials which were used in the dwelling places of the solitaries and in the cells of monks in the monasteries.

One *mēmrā* according to the oldest manuscript[7] bears the title: «On solitaries who abandoned the world and seek after the heavenly and divine life»[8]. The same *mēmrā*[9] also circulated under the title: «On solitaries and monks»[10]. In other manuscripts it appears under still other titles: «On solitaries and privations»[11], «On solitaries who flee from the world»[12], and «On solitaries that they should not look back»[13]. The text of the *mēmrā* has been edited by Bedjan[14]. In addition to manuscript sources already referred to, other new manuscript sources have emerged in the Syrian Orient[15].

Another *mēmrā* bears the title: «On the solitaries»[16]. The same *mēmrā*[17] also circulated under the titles: «On solitaries and monks»[18] and «On solitaries who dwell in the desert»[19]. Some manuscripts have added the following to the title of this *mēmrā*: «Which he sent to his

Paris Syr. 196, ZOTENBERG, *Catalogue*, p. 140ff.; Ms. Mosul Mār Tūmā; Ms. Pampakuda 52; see VÖÖBUS, *Handschriftliche Überlieferung*. The only exception is Ms. Oxford Pock. 404.

[6] Ms. Damascus Patr. 12/13; 12/14; and 12/15; Ms. Jerusalem Mark 156; Ms. Vatican Syr. 117, ASSEMANI, *Catalogus* III, p. 91; Ms. Mardin Orth. 135; 136 and 137. Cf. VÖÖBUS, *ibid.*, II, p. 124ff.

[7] Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,598, a parchment codex of the 9th cent.; WRIGHT, *Catalogue* II, p. 731f.

[8] VÖÖBUS, *Handschriftliche Überlieferung* IV, p. 38f.

[9] Its *incipit* reads: ܡܫܠܡܘܬܗ ܕܒܪ ܐܠܗܐ ܚܙܘ ܒܪܬܐ.

[10] Ms. Mardin Orth. 157, p. 47-81, *ibid.*, IV, p. 52f.

[11] Ms. Mardin Orth. 174, fol. 15aff.; *ibid.*, IV, p. 52f.

[12] Ms. Mār Mattai 27, fol. 204a-207a; *ibid.*, II, p. 30f.; Ms. Mār Mattai 287, fol. 101b-116b, *ibid.*, IV, p. 48f.; Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 310, p. 514-522, *ibid.*, IV, p. 74f.

[13] Mardin Orth. 417, quire 40, fol. 4aff., *ibid.*, IV, p. 50f.; Ms. Midyat Gülçe 9, quire 1, fol. 1b-2, fol. 2b, *ibid.*, II, p. 34f.; Ms. Midyat Gülçe 12, fol. 1bff., *ibid.*, II, p. 202f.

[14] *Homiliae selectae* IV, p. 818-836.

[15] Ms. Aleppo 102; Ms. Mardin Orth. 74, 143, 157, 169, 171, 174, 177, 417; Ms. Midyat Gülçe 10; Ms. Qaraqoš Sargis-Bakhos; Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 38.

[16] Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 17,262, fol. 198a-208b, WRIGHT, *Catalogue* II, p. 867ff.

[17] Its *incipit* reads: ܪܒܐ ܡܫܟܢܘܬܐ ܕܝܚܝ̈ܕܝܐ.

[18] Ms. Jerusalem Mark 284, fol. 214b-242a, VÖÖBUS, *Handschriftliche Überlieferung* IV, p. 24f.; Ms. Mardin Orth. 446, p. 324-334, *ibid.*, IV, p. 54f.

[19] Ms. Br. Add. 18,817, WRIGHT, *Catalogue* II, p. 803ff.

disciple who was a recluse»[20]. Still other manuscripts include the accretion, the name of the recluse, Daniel[21]. In one manuscript the same *mēmrā* bears an entirely different title: «On battles and distinctions»[22].

The text of this *mēmrā* has been edited by Bedjan[23].

The manuscript evidence in this instance has been substantially enlarged. Besides unknown manuscripts about which report was given earlier, other sources have been excised from hiding places in the Syrian Orient[24].

There are also inedited *mēmrē*, indeed, there are several such.

Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 30 is a heavy volume which contains a corpus of the *mēmrē* of Ja'qōb[25]. At the end of the collection, there are *mēmrē* on monasticism[26]. Among these, there is a *mēmrā*[27] which is different from those which have been known. It bears the title[28]: «On the solitaries, monks and dwellers of the desert»[29].

The next *mēmrā*[30] in the cycle bears the title: «On solitaries»[31] but in another manuscript it appears as «On monasticism»[32] and in still another[33] it reads: «On the solitaries and privation»[34].

[20] Ms. Vatican Syr. 566, fol. 84b-100a, VAN LANTSCHOOT, *Inventaire*, p. 91ff., VÖÖBUS, *Handschriftliche Überlieferung* II, p. 20f.; Ms. Mār Behnam 8/8, quire 4, fol. 7aff., *ibid.*, IV, p. 46f.; Ms. Jerusalem Mark 162, quire 25, fol. 10a-29, fol. 6b, *ibid.*, IV, p. 26f.; Ms. 284, fol. 213b-241a; Ms. Midyat Gülçe 11, quire 15, fol. 4b-17, fol. 8a, *ibid.*, II, p. 200f.; Ms. Midyat Gülçe 12, quire 25, fol. 26ff; *ibid.*, II, p. 202f.; Ms. Mardin Orth. 74, fol. 120b-140a, *ibid.*, II, p. 32f.

[21] Ms. Paris Syr. 197, fol. 52a-71b, ZOTENBERG, *Catalogue*, p. 144ff., VÖÖBUS, *Handschriftliche Überlieferung* IV, p. 64f.; Ms. Mardin Orth. 169, fol. 151a-187a, *ibid.*, IV, p. 48f. There in the description of the content the second *mēmrā* on the solitaries has unfortunately fallen out. Ms. Mardin Orth. 174, no. 5, *ibid.*, IV, p. 52f.

[22] ܥܠ ܩܪ̈ܒܐ ܘܦܘܪ̈ܫܢܐ, Ms. Aleppo Orth. 102, *ibid.*, IV, 2f.; this manuscript has retained a section of the *mēmrā*.

[23] *Homiliae selectae* IV, p. 836-871.

[24] Ms. Diyarbaker Başaranlar 19; Ms. Mār Mattai 27; Ms. Mardin Orth. 143, 157, 172, 174, 417, 418, 446; see VÖÖBUS, *Syriac Manuscripts*.

[25] VÖÖBUS, *Handschriftliche Überlieferung* I, p. 57f.

[26] *Mēmrā* no. 45.

[27] *Mēmrā* no. 44.

[28] ܥܠ ܝܚܝ̈ܕܝܐ ܘܕܝ̈ܪܝܐ ܘܡܕܒ̈ܪܝܐ.

[29] The *incipit* of the *mēmrā* reads: ܦܘܪܫܢܐ ܕܝܚܝ̈ܕܝܐ.

[30] The *incipit* reads: ܡܫܟܢܘܬܐ ܗܝ ܕܠܗ ܦܘܪܫܢܐ ܕܝܚܝ̈ܕܝܐ.

[31] Ms. Mardin Orth. 156, no. 7; *ibid.*, II, p. 38f.

[32] Ms. Birmingham Ming. Syr. 466, fol. 109b-111b, MINGANA, *Catalogue* I, col. 836ff.; see also VÖÖBUS, *Handschriftliche Überlieferung* IV, p. 10f.

[33] ܥܠ ܝܚܝ̈ܕܝܐ ܘܡܣܪܩܘܬܐ.

[34] ܥܠ ܝܚܝ̈ܕܝܐ ܘܡܣܪܩܐ, Ms. Jerusalem Mark 88, fol. 118b-122b; MACLER, *Notice des*

The propagation of Ja'qōb's monastic thought was not confined only to *mēmrē* specifically devoted to the furtherance of ascetic spirituality. Ja'qōb's *mēmrā* poetry extended as well to those which were composed on themes which easily gave opportunities for the elucidation and dissemination of ascetic ideas[35-36]. One cycle in particular must be singled out, one which includes *mēmrē* on virginity[37], repentance[38], fasting[39], the *bart qeyāmā*[40], admonition[41], and on certain biblical passages related to basic issues in spirituality[42].

Yet another group of *mēmrē* stood in the service of the propagation of the basic issues in monastic spirituality. This had to do with *mēmrē* in honor of the most celebrated monks. Ja'qōb has composed panegyrics on 'Aphrēm[43], Julyānā Sābā[44], Šem'ōn the Stylite[45] and on Barṣaumā[46].

Not to be overlooked is a cycle which is akin to the above. It consists of *mēmrē* composed in memory of outstanding martyrs. Moreover, this cycle is even larger. Ja'qōb has composed *mēmrē* on the first martyr, Stephanos, on Gūryā and Šemōnā, on Sarbīl, Ḥabbīb, Sargīs, Gīwargīs, Dimaṭ, the Forty Martyrs and on the martyrs in general.

c. *The Special Role of the* Mēmrē *of Ja'qōb*

The popularity of the *mēmrē* of Ja'qōb as attested in the manuscript tradition — in countless collections, handbooks of mixed *mēmrē* and volumes of selections from ascetic authors — requires additional comment. The great service rendered by these compositions in fostering

manuscrits syriaques does not mention this manuscript; see VÖÖBUS, *Handschriftliche Überlieferung* IV, p. 22f.

35-36 Note from the editor: Under the circumstances, no text could be supplied for these two footnotes, which were refering to Ms. Vatican Syr. 543, fol. 32a-33b.

37 *Martyrii, qui et Sahdona*, ed. BEDJAN, p. 832-842; VÖÖBUS, *Handschriftliche Überlieferung* II, p. 215; IV, p. 97.

38 *Homiliae selectae*, ed. BEDJAN; VÖÖBUS, *Handschriftliche Überlieferung* II, p. 215; IV, p. 95.

39 *Ibid.*, II, p. 217; IV, p. 97.

40 *Ibid.*, IV, p. 97.

41 *Ibid.*, II, p. 217; IV, p. 97.

42 Particularly a *mēmrā* on Matth. VIII,20; on Matth. XVI,26; on Matth. XIX,16; on Matth. XIX,27; and on Matth. XXV,1-13.

43 *Ibid.*, IV, p. 98.

44 *Ibid.*, II, p. 220; IV, p. 99.

45 *Ibid.*, II, p. 220; IV, p. 99.

46 *Ibid.*, II, p. 219; IV, p. 98.

monastic thought and in inspiring those of the ascetic life is a matter of some moment.

The quality of these materials has been conspicuous.

First of all, in Ja'qōb of Serūg, we have to do with a person of extraordinary gifts. His person was surrounded by the halo of great fame. His literary creativity[1] exceeded everything that had been produced in the genre of *mēmrē*. There can scarcely be any doubt that he was most productive in his genre of literary creativity and that he was recognized in the eyes of his fellow believers as the greatest among the great. His contemporaries greeted the manifestations of his creative power with awe and respect. They speak with astonishment of the fact that during his lifetime a large staff of scribes and copyists engaged in securing his poetic production was put at his disposal[2]. His literary heritage is supposed to have consisted of no less than seven hundred and sixty *mēmrē*. That is the number of the *mēmrē* which appears in Bar 'Ebrāyā[3]. The biography[4] of Ja'qōb which was recently discovered[5] speaks of seven hundred and sixty-three *mēmrē*[6]. This number also appears in the biographical sketch[7] of him which was edited by Assemani[8] as well as in another biographical sketch[9] published by Abbeloos[10] and also in other important manuscript sources which have been unearthed[11].

Not only did quantity cause amazement, so did the quality of his

1 BAUMSTARK, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, p. 148ff.; CHABOT, *Littérature syriaque*, p. 62.

2 BAR 'EBRĀYĀ, *Chronicon eccl.* I, col. 191.

3 *Ibid.*, I, col. 191.

4 ܬܘܒ، ܫܘܒܚܐ ܕܡܠܦܢܐ ܐܘܣܛܘܡܘܬܐ ܕܟܠܗ ܕܝܥܩܘܒ.

5 Ms. Mardin Orth. 256, fol. 1b-5a; VÖÖBUS, *Syriac Manuscripts*. Ms. Istanbul Maryem Ana, a huge corpus of biographical materials, has no signature; its measurements are 30 × 25,5, and the vita appears on fol. 190a-190b; the manuscript seems to come from the 16th or 17th cent. A *mēmrā* by an anonymous author appears in Ms. Mār Mattai 243.

6 ܗܘܘ ܥܒܕ ܡ̈ܐܡܪܐ ܘܫܬܝܢ ܘܬܠܬܐ. ܣܦܪ ܡܢ ܡܥܕܪ̈ܢܐ ܕܟܬܒ̈ܐ. ܘܡܟܬܒܢ̈ܐ ܗܘ ܡܥܒܕܢܐ ܘܡܫܡܫܢܘܬܐ, Ms. Mardin Orth. 256, fol. 2b.

7 Ms. Vatican Syr. 37, fol. 16a.

8 *Bibliotheca orient.* I, p. 286ff.; also by WENIG, *Schola syriaca*, p. 43f.

9 Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 12,174, fol. 285a, WRIGHT, *Catalogue* III, p. 1123ff.

10 *De Vita et scriptis Jacobi*, p. 311f.

11 The oldest witness appears in Ms. Damascus Patr. 12/18 which is of the 12th cent. Others are: Ms. Mosul Orth. 361 which comes from the 17th cent.; Ms. Damascus Patr. 9/8 was written in 1726/7 A.D.; Ms. Mardin Orth. 229 was copied in the year 1919; Ms. Mardin Orth. 275 is also a copy by a modern hand; about the manuscripts in Mardin see VÖÖBUS, *Syriac Manuscripts*.

production. The question of the quality of this material becomes acute as soon as one considers the form of his poetry. The meter itself, that is, the dodeka syllable metrum which he employs, makes this fully evident. According to the tradition, this form was invented by Jaʿqōb himself. We are expressly told this in the long panegyricus[12] which has previously been known[13] but for which new and important manuscript sources have come to light[14]. The most important passage regarding this point reads as follows:

> «And as from a spring he caused to run and flow the balanced *mēmrē*, in a new metre which was not practiced before him, according to the twelve syllabi he measured the quantity (of verses) which is more excellent than the metre (employed) by the Greeks and the Syrians»[15].

This innovation reveals Jaʿqōb's desire to create a form which would be commensurate with his aims in poetical creation. Over against verse in the seven syllable form in use earlier, the new form allowed for an amplitude which the spirit of his muse needed. Thus was the way opened for new freshness and life in didactic poetry.

This author of extraordinary talent, whose verses flow easily and smoothly and swell into poems of mighty dimension[16], through his creation shows himself to be a great master[17]. This comes clearly to the fore in the unique character of his work. It far surpasses the hum-drum material, confessional in color and polemic in its dogmatic. Before our

[12] Ms. Jerusalem Mark 156, fol. 70b; MACLER, *Notice des manuscrits syriaques* does not mention this manuscript.

[13] Ms. Paris Syr. 177, fol. 151b; ZOTENBERG, *Catalogue*, p. 123ff.

[14] Ms. Jerusalem Mark 156 is of the 12th cent. and thus represents the oldest document. Ms. Chicago Oriental Institute A 12,008 is of the 12th or the 13th cent. Other manuscripts are younger, namely Ms. Mardin Orth. 162; Ms. Mardin Orth. 144; Ms. Damascus Patr. 3/20.

[15] ܘܐܝܟ ܡܢ ܡܒܘܥܐ ܐܪܕܝ ܘܐܫܦܥ ܡܐܡܪ̈ܐ ܡܬܩܠܐ ܒܡܫܘܚܬܐ ܚܕܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܐܬܕܪܫܬ ܡܢ ܩܕܡܘܗܝ܀ ܡܢ ܬܪܬܥܣܪ ܗܓ̈ܝܐ ܟܡܝܘܬܐ ܡܫܚ ܟܝܠܐ: ܕܝܬܝܪ ܡܢ ܟܝܠܐ ܕܝܘ̈ܢܝܐ ܘܣܘܪ̈ܝܝܐ ܗܘܘ.

[16] His Hexaemeron, *Homiliae selectae*, ed. BEDJAN III, p. 1ff. comprises more than 3,000 verses! There are *mēmrē* which are even more extensive. A *mēmrā* about the crucifixion of the Lord, *ibid.*, II, p. 447ff., consists of more than 3,300 verses!

[17] This is even so in his monotony. «Seine Monotonie ist freilich nicht jenes intensive Durchdringen der Seele mit einem grossen Gedanken, der unter den verschiedensten Gesichtspunkten und den mannigfaltigsten Strahlenbrechungen doch stets derselbe bleibt, wie es uns beim hl. Ephräm entzückt, aber auch nicht jene dürre, schwerfällige Tautologie, die uns bei Isaak von Antiochien zuweilen abstösst; sie ist ein freundliches, anspruchsloses Einerlei, ähnlich dem Murmeln eines Baches, welches eher einschläfert als ermüdet», LANDESDORFER, *Ausgewählte Schriften*, p. 269f.

eyes there emerges an extraordinary spirit who in the heat of christological strife and the agitation of dogmatic conflict which marked that period retained his calm and dignity. The themes which drove others seldom come to the fore in his writings. Indeed, his attitude was condemned by his contemporaries[18]. But Jaʿqōb wanted to put his creative powers solely into the furtherance of the spiritual life. One senses at every step that this was the only concern which fueled his inspiration. His *mēmrē* radiate a spirituality which finds expression in the spirit of gentleness, meekness, intimacy and warmth. The abundance of his creative talent, the exuberance of his inspiration, the delicacy of his spirit, the profundities of his religious insight and the charm of spirituality brought him boundless admiration. The honor, esteem and veneration bestowed upon him by his fellow believers is given voice in a passus taken from his panegyricus[19] which according to the oldest manuscript[20] reads:

> «This is he who has drunk from the blessed spring of Eden, and then gave others to drink as it is written: This is he from whose lips living waters have streamed, and the church of the Son draws from them at all times. This is he from whose insight abundant streams have gushed, which delight the flock of the Son who had died for it»[21].

With regard to the attraction exercised by his poetry upon a wide audience, our knowledge is supplemented by certain summary statements preserved in biographical texts on him. Some interesting glimpses are provided by the panegyricus. These appear in a section which does not appear in the manuscript[22] of the panegyricus which has been made available[23]. However, it does appear in another codex[24] of this

[18] In this connection one must be reminded of his contemporaries and particularly of Philoxenos of Mabbūg who has condemned very sharply such an attitude. His rules and precepts for monks constitute a passionate appeal for the strife and battle in the interest of the dogmatic formula; see page 141f.

[19] Ms. Jerusalem Mark 156, fol. 68a.

[20] The text in Ms. Vatican Syr. 117 is corrupt here; this text is printed in ABBELOOS, *De vita et scriptis Jacobi*, p. 44f.

[21] ܗܢܘ ܕܐܫܬܝ، ܡܢ ܡܒܘܥܐ ܒܪܝܟܐ ܕܥܕܝܢ. ܘܗܦܟ ܐܫܩܝ ܗܘ ܠܐܚܪ̈ܢܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܟܬܝܒ: ܗܢܘ ܕܕܘܪܘ ܡܢ ܣܦܘܬܗ ܡ̈ܝܐ ܚ̈ܝܐ. ܘܡܢܗܘܢ ܫܬܝܐ ܥܕܬܐ ܕܒܪܐ ܒܟܠܙܒܢ: ܗܢܘ ܕܐܒܥ ܡܢ ܒܗ ܒܘܢܗ ܪ̈ܕܝܐ ܥܬܝܪ̈ܐ. ܕܡܒܣܡܝܢ ܠܗ ܠܥܢܗ ܕܒܪܐ ܕܡܝܬ ܥܠ ܐܦܝ̈ܗ:

[22] Ms. Vatican Syr. 117, fol. 120aff., ASSEMANI, *Catalogus* III, 91ff.

[23] ABBELOOS, *De vita et scriptis Jacobi*, p. 24ff.; the text here has been reduced and this paragraph has been left out.

[24] Ms. Paris Syr. 177, fol. 142a, ZOTENBERG, *Catalogue*, p. 123ff.

panegyricus recently made available[25]. However, the transmission of this text is not without fault and it is therefore necessary to search for the earliest layer in the textual tradition[26]. The text reads as follows:

> «The life of the victorious ones, of just kings as of righteous ones, he disseminated into the ears of all his listeners and of the monks, the anchorites and ascetics and the mourners and of the famous and blessed martyrs spoke the elect one, and praised much their athletic contest, the purity of the single ones as well as that of the virgins, and praised the sincerity of their virginity as is right».

That which is expressed in these lines receives a powerful confirmation in manuscript sources which point to the places where his *mēmrē* were gratefully used, namely, the cells of the solitaries, ascetics, mourners and monks.

[25] VÖÖBUS, «Ein bislang unbekanntes Sermo», p. 91.
[26] Ms. Jerusalem Mark 156, fol. 68b.

IV. STIMULI FOR DEVELOPED SPIRITUALITY

1. THE CONTRIBUTION OF PHILOXENOS OF MABBŪG

a. *His Paraenetical* Mēmrē

While Michael Syrus refers in very general terms to the fact that the bishop of Mabbūg has written on monasticism[1], much more is said in biographies of him. In an anonymous biography, it is stated that «he wrote on instruction to the monks and[2] ten books saturated with spiritual thoughts»[3]. Another biography by 'Elī reads: «He composed books for the solitaries and monks, ten books that they should read and profit from them»[4].

Under the title «Paraenetical *mēmrē*»[5] Philoxenos has incorporated thirteen *mēmrē*. A very impressive preservation of manuscripts reaches back into the sixth century[6]. A large number of manuscripts belongs to the later centuries[7]. In addition, the evidence includes many single *mēmrē* and portions of them, and almost countless texts and excerpts in the ascetic florilegia. Evidence of such importance gives us an idea of the immense role which this work must have enjoyed in the hands of the monks and solitaries. These paraenetical *mēmrē* were the most widely used of all the works of Philoxenos and were most frequently copied.

That the collection of paraenetical *mēmrē*[8] goes back to Philoxenos himself seems to raise no serious question.

There are no indications to throw light upon the chronological side

[1] *Chronique* IX,7, éd. CHABOT, p. 258.
[2] Ms. Mardin Orth. 276 reads here «in».
[3] MINGANA, «New Documents on Philoxenos», p. 153.
[4] ÉLI DE QARTAMIN, *Mēmrā sur Philoxène*, éd. DE HALLEUX, p. 8.
[5] ܡܐܡܖ̈ܐ ܕܡܚܦܛܢܘܬܐ.
[6] Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,596, of the 6th or 7th cent., WRIGHT, *Catalogue* II, p. 531. This manuscript has preserved *mēmrē* X-VI and VIII-XIII. Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,612 is of the same age, WRIGHT, *Catalogue* II, p. 698 and it contains a portion of *Mēmrā* VII. Among the new sources Ms. Mardin Orth. 420 is the most important since it contains all the 13 *mēmrē*; long is the list of manuscripts which have preserved selected *mēmrē*.
[7] DE HALLEUX, *Philoxène de Mabbog*, p. 280ff.
[8] About the theory which makes a distinction between two series of homilies in the present structure of the collection, see LEMOINE, *Homélies*, p. 20ff. Regarding the value of this theory see HAUSHERR, «*Spiritualité Syrienne*», p. 173ff.

with regard to the composition of this important work. The entire manuscript tradition remains silent regarding this respect. Budge, the editor of the *mēmrē*, has dated the composition of this cycle to about the year 485[9]. His arguments are very general but nothing better has come to light. Lemoine has placed the composition of the *mēmrē* into the time before he was elevated to his episcopacy in the year 485[10]. It seems to be reasonable to assume that these *mēmrē* were composed during his episcopacy. All in all, it would have been natural for the bishop of Mabbūg to foster the spiritual needs of the monks, ascetics and nuns in his diocese[11].

In the introduction, Philoxenos particularly gives advice on the beginnings of ascetic life[12], «the accomplishment of the rules[13] and exercises» and the struggle with the passions[14].

The first part of the collection[15] is devoted to the beginnings of the ascetic life and, according to the ascetic terminology employed in this treatment, this would represent «the corporeal stage». The second part of the collection is devoted to progress in the struggle against the passions; accordingly this would represent «the stage of the soul»[16]. The third part of the work, which one would have expected on the basis of some statements in the introduction to the effect that this would be about «the spiritual stage», is absent[17].

He intended to speak also of the purification of the intellect in solitude[18], of spiritual contemplation[19] and of pure prayer[20]. He also announced his intention to deal with the internal ascent to the «supreme stage»[21], namely perfection[22].

The *mēmrē* are dedicated to the following subject matters: on faith[23],

[9] *Discourses*, ed. BUDGE.
[10] LEMOINE, *Homélies*.
[11] DE HALLEUX, *Philoxène de Mabbog*, p. 287f.
[12] *Mēmrē* II-VII.
[13] *Mēmrē* VIII-XIII.
[14] *Mēmrā* I, p. 14f.
[15] About this question see DE HALLEUX, *Philoxène de Mabbog*, p. 285f.
[16] *Mēmrā*, I, p. 7, 10, 17, 25.
[17] ܕܘܒܪ̈ܐ.
[18] *Ibid.*, p. $13_{22\text{-}23}$.
[19] *Ibid.*, I, p. 15, 16-17.
[20] *Ibid.*, I, p. 8.
[21] *Ibid.*, I, p. 16.
[22] *Ibid.*, I, p. 25.
[23] *Mēmrā* II-III, p. 26ff.

on simplicity[24], a virtue of the desert, which involves also other related themes like humility and imitation of Christ's life. The following *mēmrē* are devoted to the themes of the fear of God[25], renouncement[26], struggles in the service of asceticism[27] and the battle against luxury[28]. Here the «struggle», «fight», «battle», are the terms which most frequently appear in his vocabulary.

Besides the paraenetical *mēmrē* Philoxenos has produced numerous treatises on selected subjects regarding monastic life. These have been very welcome in the collections of ascetic writings and florilegia of the monastic virtuosi. Besides the known sources, new discoveries have enriched our knowledge regarding the preservation of this legacy[29].

b. *Their Physiognomy*

The paraenetical *mēmrē* were designed to be a systematic treatment of all the phenomena of asceticism. They were meant to be a spiritual therapeutic. The *mēmrē* present Philoxenos as a champion of ascetic ideas who, in a fatherly way, gave his advise. These *mēmrē* were addressed to the newer members in the monastic communities, and in them, Philoxenos warns his disciples that it is not enough to withdraw from the world «externally» — the real withdrawal must be «internal» in the thoughts and in the mind, the only proper realm for the work of faith. The entire cycle is an intense spiritual appeal.

In the prologue, Philoxenos states that he has written this introduction as an encouragement to reading the wealth of things which follow after, of the way in which an ascetic should begin and how he should proceed in upbuilding the edifice of his spiritual life[1]. This should take place step-by-step. Starting with the faith as the foundation of every spiritual life, Philoxenos proceeds to treat thoroughly all aspects of asceticism and

[24] *Mēmrā* IV-V, p. 74ff.
[25] *Mēmrā* VI-VII, p. 159ff.
[26] *Mēmrā* VIII-IX, p. 222ff.
[27] *Mēmrā* X-XI, p. 353ff., namely *mēmrā* X: On the lust of the belly, p. 353ff. and *mēmrā* XI, On abstinence or mortification, p. 420ff.
[28] *Mēmrā* XII-XIII, p. 494ff.
[29] From these materials there are those which must be singled out: Ms. Aleppo Orth. 102; Ms. Anḥel Mār Qyriaqōs, a manuscript in quart size, which has no signature; Ms. Mardin Orth. 422, Ms. 418 and Ms. 426, see VÖÖBUS, *Syriac Manuscripts*; Ms. Midyat Gülçe 4; Ms. Midyat Hori Melki, which has no signature; the volume is devoted to ascetic materials.
[1] *Mēmrā* I, p. 10.

mortification. His huge material marks the beginning of an ardous road. He writes: «And how (the disciple) should advance and ascend all the grades of the (Christian life) and conduct, until he arrives at the topmost degree of love, from whence he shall ascend to the great perfection»[2]. This leaves one with the impression that he promises more which he supplies in this work. It is possible that he could not include everything he intended to incorporate in this work. It is less probable that something of this important work was lost.

Very strong emphasis is laid upon faith. In fact, it constitutes the foundation for all the deliberations. It is the ground idea. In the realm of moral order, there can be nothing real and solid without faith. In this emphasis, Philoxenos follows all the traditions. 'Aphrahaṭ had produced a work in which he emphasized that it was built «on the faith and the works through which it arrives at its perfection»[3].

As 'Aphrahaṭ does, so does Philoxenos. He begins his work with faith as the basic theme which constitutes the foundation[4] for the rest. That is the premise: faith makes it possible to believe God in everything of which He speaks, without testimony or proofs of certainty[5]. He calls faith «the tongue of God»[6]. Its importance is very strongly emphasized: fasting, almsgiving, loving kindness, the life of the nazirite and ascetic, humility, painful seclusion and everything else are nothing, even less than fleeting shadows, without faith. Everything depends on the test of faith[7]. Faith also puts things into a proper perspective—negatively, things which appear glorious in the world, in the light of faith are reduced to their proper size; positively, faith glorifies poverty[8], extols ascetic labors and elevates services performed through pain and suffering[9]. Faith also must be the raison d'être for forsaking the world[10].

Philoxenos very strongly emphasizes the uniqueness of ascetic life[11].

[2] ܘܐܝܟܢܐ ܢܬܗܠܟ ܘܢܣܩ ܒܟܠܗܘܢ ܕܪ̈ܓܐ ܕܕܘܒܪܐ: ܕܒܟܢܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܝܘܬܐ ܠܕܪܓܐ ܥܠܝܐ ܕܚܘܒܐ. ܘܡܢܗ ܢܣܩ ܠܕܪܓܐ ܕܓܡܝܪܘܬܐ, p. 25_{5-7}.

[3] *Demonstrationes*, ed. PARISOT I, p. 3.

[4] «The beginning of the building of his holy body», *Mēmrā* III, p. 48.

[5] *Mēmrā* II, p. 26ff.

[6] *Mēmrā* II, p. 41.

[7] «Faith is the eye of discernment which looks at everything — in the realm of spiritual life or mysteries beyond which are promised to us», *Mēmrā* III, p. 61f.

[8] *Mēmrā* III, p. 62f.

[9] *Mēmrā* III, p. 72.

[10] *Mēmrā* III, p. 61ff.

[11] He rejects any mechanical meaning of asceticism. One of his strongest statements

This uniqueness is related to very strong negative statements on the secular life, the consequence of which was the necessity of renouncing the world and withdrawing from it. Such a position is brought into bright focus by the statement: «I do not say that those who are in the world cannot be justified but I say that it is impossible for them to arrive at perfection»[12]. In such a view, justice[13] and perfection are radically distinguished. That this is so, Philoxenos makes perfectly clear: «For the world, i.e. justice and justice of the law, that is practiced among them, are adversaries of perfection»[14]. This distinction is the same as is made in the *Liber graduum* which makes a separation between the just and the perfect ones[15]. Philoxenos sees no correlation between a Christian in the world and perfection in the desert; in other words, he will not allow the distinction between Christian vocation in the world and perfection. The work of faith can take place only in the desert. In the world, this is absolutely impossible. It can be accomplished only in the mystical order[16]. Asceticism in the desert is the only road to contemplation and as such is a unique road[17]. That is the road through purification. All desires and all efforts must be directed toward the virtue, purity and sanctity of the soul. All other ways and means of seeking contemplation[18] lead to illusion.

Special comments must be made about the spiritual climate which permeates all of these paraenetical *mēmrē*. It is very conspicuous that any and every reference to the political-religious actualities simply are absent. The entire atmosphere is serene and elated. His paraenetical *mēmrē*, as well as other ascetic writings, reveal the author at every step as a true

reads: ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܕܝܢ. ܗܝ ܕܡܛܠ ܕܡܬܚܫܒܐ ܚܕܬܐ: ܐܦ ܠܐ ܟܠ ܐܢܫ ܡܚܕܐ ܠܗ̇. ܡܩܒܠ ܠܗ̇ ܐܠܐ ܙܥܘܪ̈ܐ ܘܒܡܢܝܢܐ: ܘܗܢܘܢ ܣܦܩܝܢ ܠܗ̇. ܕܦܩܚ ܠܟ ܕܬܐܟܘܠ ܒܣܪܐ ܕܠܐ ܪܓܬܐ: ܬܐܟܘܠ ܡܢ ܛܠܦܚ̈ܐ ܒܪܓܬܐ, «and I also say that which, because it will be thought new, not every man will forthwith accept, but the few and the small in number will understand it, and these will suffice: it is better for you to eat flesh without lust than lentiles with it», *Mēmrā* XI, p. 442_{13-17}.

[12] *Mēmrā* VIII, p. 223.

[13] ܙܕܝܩܘܬܐ.

[14] *Mēmrā* VIII, p. 223.

[15] See page 3f.

[16] Cf. LEMOINE, «La spiritualité de Philoxène», p. 351ff.

[17] VÖLKER, *Das Vollkommenheitsideal des Origenes*.

[18] HAUSHERR, «Contemplation et sainteté: une remarquable mise au point par Philoxène», p. 171ff.

guide od souls, conscious of the importance of the issues at stake. His lofty thoughts are far above quarrel and strife and Monophysite polemics. It is a work that comes to us as if from an entirely different Philoxenos.

Finally, special words are necessary about the general physiognomy of the ascetic thoughtworld. That which becomes very conspicuous in the paraenetical *mēmrē* is the fact that caution has been exercised in using speculative elements drawn from Greek mystical philosophy. In general, it can be said that the paraenetical *mēmrē* rest in their essential extent on the literary genre unfolded by 'Aphrahaṭ and 'Aphrēm. Ethical exhortations flow from the biblical traditions, borrowed from the Old as well as the New Testament. Its typology is drawn from the Book of Exodus as, for instance, in the case of the crossing of the Red Sea which is used allegorically as a symbol of monastic renouncement. Other episodes from the Old Testament have been used for the same purpose, as allegories filled with a new content. The gospels have been utilized for the same purpose. All in all, these traditions flow from age-old Syrian spirituality.

However, there are some echoes of the teachings of Evagrios. Occasionally, reflections of his influence show up[19]. Philoxenos also quotes the Praktikos[20], introducing its author as «one of the spiritual masters»[21]. But all these echoes and reflections are peripheral. As a result, the stream which flows from the river of ancient Syrian spirituality contains subcurrents of mystical philosophy. From this perspective, the paraenetical *mēmrē* do not represent the sum total spirituality of Philoxenos. In his other writings, the theological substratum, as well as the mystical philosophy, present a rather different picture.

c. *Some Basic Themes*

Among the themes to which special treatment is given is simplicity[1]. «Simplicity then is the gift of nature, and it belongs to the Creator»[2]. He adds that «simplicity becomes the dwelling place of God»[3]. Simplicity

[19] DE HALLEUX, *Philoxène de Mabbog*, p. 30; HARB, «L'attitude», p. 136ff., 150ff.

[20] This quotation is taken from Prakticos I,2. The original reads: βασιλεία οὐρανῶν ἐστιν ἀπάθεια ψυχῆς μετὰ γνώσεως τῶν ὄντων ἀληθινοῦς, ed. MIGNE PG XL, col. 1221.

[21] This quotation was identified by HAUSHERR, «*Spiritualité syrienne*», p. 179.

[1] ܫܦܝܘܬܐ, *Mēmrā* IV. In the following *mēmrā* he says that the subject matter of *mēmrā* IV is on ܫܦܝܘܬܐ ܘܬܡܝܡܘܬܐ, *Mēmrā* V, p. 120_4.

[2] *Mēmrā* IV, p. 108.

[3] ܘܫܦܝܘܬܐ ܗܘܝܐ ܒܝܬ ܡܥܡܪܐ ܠܐܠܗܐ, *Mēmrā* IV, p. 118_5.

permeates the life of Jesus[4] so that his life became the perfect type of simplicity. The lines are drawn sharply between those persons who exemplified simplicity and others: John the Baptist and all those who lived in the desert were simple people[5]. This company, besides Old Testament figures, also includes Paul as a type of simple person[6]. Over against this type is placed a category consisting of Pharisees and Sadducees, representing the cunning and crafty men of this world[7]. This category represents the side of the calumniator[8].

Then the treatment turns to the benefits of simplicity. Simplicity brings forth all the virtues[9], and such a life is a blessing in its entire context, because it is restful—around such a person there is no contention, no strife and no quarreling. Thus «the humble garb of hair» and simplicity belong together[10].

An especial *mēmrā* is devoted to the theme of abstinence[11] or mortification. That is due to its importance. What follows is a huge commentary on the logion of the gospel on the narrow road[12]. For this the suitable text form of Matth. VII, 14 is chosen.

Philoxenos states: «The first rule in this field is the cultivation of fasting and abstinence»[13]. Without abstinence, none of the virtues can be cultivated at all. Therefore, his urgent admonition is: «Preserve this, O disciple, the rule[14] of abstinence, then may you also arrive at the power of freedom»[15]. The *mēmrā* includes very detailed instructions[16].

d. *The Scheme of Three Births*

Philoxenos has worked out a scheme of three births in order to depict the glorious position that belongs to the ascetics.

[4] He taught simplicity of children, cf. Matth. XVIII,3, p. 115f., see also p. 132f.

[5] *Mēmrā* IV, p. 85ff.

[6] *Mēmrā* IV, p. 86ff.

[7] *Mēmrā* IV, p. 113ff.

[8] *Mēmrā* V, p. 123f.

[9] *Mēmrā* V, p. 118.

[10] *Mēmrā* V, p. $122_{8\text{-}20}$.

[11] [illegible].

[12] *Mēmrā* IX, p. 420ff.

[13] *Mēmrā* XI, p. 42.

[14] ܩܢܘܢܐ.

[15] *Mēmrā* XI, p. $456_{6\text{-}7}$.

[16] Among other precepts it is said that the perfect disciple distances himself from the beasts and acts like a free man, *Mēmrā* XI, p. 433ff.

The first is on the level of nature. The natural child is born, from non-existence into existence[1], in the womb. It is designed but as yet does not exist; it is formed only little by little until it has completed the measure of its unformed substance[2]. This represents a stage which is separated from the world, having no contact with it. The observations of Philoxenos[3] on this stage do not need to hold us longer.

The second birth is effected by baptism. Through this sacramental acts, the child becomes a Christian[4]. The second birth reaches a higher level than the level of nature by initiating a human being into the Christian life.

However, Philoxenos here presents us with imagery whose roots lie in very archaic traditions of spirituality. He thus departs from the common tenets of the time. On his view of it, a particular position is to be reserved for the ascetics in the scale of successively higher levels of birth. This issue is so important that it is better to let Philoxenos himself present his arguments.

The status created by baptism he describes as a womb, but in a figurative sense: «For a dwelling in this world to a man is like the natural womb is to the child conceived therein, as one who, while still in the womb, is in darkness»[5]. Philoxenos makes this point very emphatically: «Further, just as — however much the child may grow in the womb — the measure of his growth is limited there by the capacity of the womb, even so — in the womb of our nature, however much a man be justified in the world — is the measure of his righteousness limited by the capacity of the womb of the world in which he lives»[6]. It is said about such a person that there is no hope for him so long as he continues in this status: «And however much he may grow and become strong in this righteousness while he is in the world, he still exists as an unformed substance because he is shut up in the world like a child in the womb»[7]. As a child

[1] «Framed of seed and blood» in the womb.

[2] *Mēmrā* IX, p. 161ff.

[3] Even his birth, although he is healthy and complete in his natural frame, he cannot make use of his members since he needs growth and education.

[4] *Mēmrā* IX, p. 258ff.

[5] [illegible], *Mēmrā* IX, p. $260_{3\text{-}5}$.

[6] *Mēmrā*, IX, p. 264.

[7] [illegible]

is not able to become a man in the womb, even so can a man not attain his spiritual destination.

The third birth is the only way from the imprisonment of the sensual world to the spiritual world. Only that can mean a new existence in freedom. It can take place only by a baptism «from the world in the love of God»[8], that is, the decision to leave the world completely. Only then can the life of perfection begin. Only the disciple who passes all the tests and trials set forth for endurance in this stage can enter the realm of light. The perfect disciple alone can experience «the truth of knowledge»[9] and be «renewed in knowledge»[10].

e. *Monasticism as the Unique Road to Perfection*

Let us begin with a crucial statement by Philoxenos himself: «For I do not say also that those who are in the world cannot be justified, but that it is not possible for them to arrive at perfection for the world itself is an obstacle to perfection»[1]. Those who remain in the world remain on the road of justice. This goes through the keeping of the «smaller commandments», acts of mercy, giving assistance to the ascetics, the solitaries and monks. However, all these activities cannot go beyond the limitation set for righteousness practiced in the world[2]. The reason is this, that: «For as long as a man possesses human wealth, whether it be little, or whether it be much, he is unable to walk in the path of perfection»[3]. It becomes a fetter to the mind and a chain to the rays of light illumining the understanding. The truth is that: «That man is not able to serve God worthily while he is in the world, and while he is a possessor of riches, and the owner of wealth»[4]. «But a man, being a possessor of wealth, is

[illegible], *Mēmrā* IX, p. 263_{24}-264_{3}.

[8] [illegible], *Mēmrā* IX, p. $276_{16\text{-}17}$.

[9] *Mēmrā* IX, p. 290.

[10] *Mēmrā* IX, p. 291.

[1] [illegible], *Mēmrā* VIII, p. $223_{6\text{-}9}$.

[2] *Mēmrā* VIII, p. 255.

[3] [illegible], *Mēmrā* VII, p. $224_{4\text{-}6}$.

[4] [illegible], *Mēmrā* VII, p. $225_{4\text{-}6}$.

able to be justified by that other measure of righteousness which is worked in the world, if it be (the case) that he is not a servant who worships his riches but is a master of the things which he possesses»[5]. Thus a man of righteousness in the world, despite everything he is able to accomplish by the fulfilling of the commandments, cannot attain a higher level: «However much a man may be justified in the world, the measure of this righteousness is limited by the capacity of the womb of the world in which he lives»[6]. «And as a child is not able to become a man in the womb, even so can a man not become perfect in the world»[7]. Only one way is open: «Now therefore it is meet for those who desire to be freed from the fetters of the world to release themselves (from it) completely»[8]. Thus «the end of the path of righteousness is absolute poverty, for so long as a man possesses human wealth he cannot follow the heavenly path»[9]. Therefore the world must be put off absolutely. The true disciple must do this while he is young, when «as yet our foundation is new and while our strength is yet in us»[10], namely, before the worldly temptations, lusts and desires have done their work in exhausting the soul's power[11].

f. *The Episode of Jesus' Baptism as a Pattern for Ascetics*

The episode of baptism in the life of Jesus in Philoxenos is depicted in such a way that it gives the ascetic's life its ultimate motivation as well as a concrete pattern.

Given such imagery, the Jordan constitutes a crossroad in the life of Jesus. Before baptism, he is depicted as one who goes on the way of the commandments. He, in his conduct, was fulfilling all the commandments

[5] ܗܘ̇، ܓܝܪ ܒܡܫܘܚܬܐ ܐܚܪܬܐ ܕܙܕܝܩܘܬܐ ܕܡܬܦܠܚܐ ܒܗ̇ ܒܥܠܡܐ: ܡܨܐ ܗܘ ܕܢܙܕܕܩ ܒܗ̇ ܐܢܫ، ܦܠܚܐ ܕܩܢܝܢܐ: ܐܢ ܗܘ ܕܠܐ ܥܒܕܐ ܗܘ ܕܦܠܚ ܠܥܘܬܪܗ ܐܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܡܪܐ ܕܩܢܝܢܗ, *Mēmrā* VIII, p. $225_{14\text{-}18}$.

[6] *Mēmrā* IX, p. 264.

[7] *Mēmrā* IX, p. $264_{3\text{-}5}$.

[8] ܘܡܟܝܠ ܙܕܩ ܠܟܠܗܘܢ ܕܨܒܝܢ ܕܢܫܬܪܘܢ ܡܢ ܐܣܘܪܘܗܝ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܡܫܠܡܐܝܬ ܢܫܪܘܢ ܢܦܫܗܘܢ, *Mēmrā* IX, p. $294_{2\text{-}4}$.

[9] Therefore Jesus has sent his disciples to proclaim the gospel with absolute poverty, *Mēmrā* VIII, p. 232, 236f.

[10] *Mēmrā* I, p. 19.

[11] It is absolutely necessary to be under the care of spiritual masters and become obedient to their ordinances; these masters are called ܪܒܢܐ, *Mēmrā* I, p. $19_{11\text{-}13}$.

of the old covenant required of men. It is described in detailed fashion just how he met those requirements. Yet, by doing all this in obedience, he did not reach the level of perfection[1].

The baptism of Jesus therefore is enveloped in a mysterious nimbus: «He was formed of Fire and of Spirit of baptism»[2]. It is very noteworthy that this imagery has been spun out of a peculiar text form which, with its transposition, deviates from the Greek original text[3] to root in the Old Syriac version[4]. This «Fire-Spirit» sequence is a phenomenon which appears in other very ancient sources[5] and emerges in texts related to very archaic traditions[6]. Its roots reach back to archaic strata of baptismal imagery[7] and are reflected in ancient Syriac patristic literature[8]. Through these echoes of a very archaic stratum, we can now only sense its very archaic background[9], one which has become very elusive. It stems from times immemorial, leaving us with the impression that such imagery must once have played a very important role in the realm of archaic Syrian Christianity.

This event of Fire-Spirit baptism is depicted as a turning point in the divine drama: «A place of crossing from one world to the other, from the carnal world to the spiritual world»[10]. The Jordan becomes a de-

[1] ܠܗܢܐ ܕܘܒܪܐ: ܗܘ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܚܘܝܗ ܘܐܦ ܒܨܝܪܐ ܗ̇ܘ ܡܢ ... ܓܡܝܪܘܬܐ, «This conduct (of life) which Christ manifested and although it fell short of perfection ...», *Mēmrā* IX, p. $249_{5\text{-}6}$.

[2] ܗܘܐ ܡܬܓܒܠ ܡܢ ܢܘܪܐ ܘܡܢ ܪܘܚܐ, *Mēmrā* IX, p. $261_{22\text{-}23}$.

[3] Matth. III,11 and Luke III,16: ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρί.

[4] The reading of Matth. III,11 in Syr-Sin: ܒܢܘܪܐ ܘܒܪܘܚܐ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ, also Luke III,16 in Syr-Sin (Syr-Cur).

[5] The Pistis Sophia records a promise by Jesus which speaks of the baptism of fire and the baptism of the Holy Spirit, ed. SCHMIDT-TILL, p. 245.

[6] The same appears in Makarios, BERTHOLD, *Makarios/Symeon, Reden und Briefe. Die Sammlung I, Die Logia B2-29*, p. 83. The same phrase emerges in the *Liber graduum*, *Mēmrā* XII,4, col. 295. It appears also in Jōḥannān of Apamea, *Drei Traktate*, ed. RIGNELL, p. 36f.

[7] The phenomenon of light appearance emerges also in the Diatessaron, see VÖÖBUS, *Early Versions of the NT*, p. 15ff. See also Justin Martyr, *Dialogus* 88,3. See also KMOSKO, De apocrypha quadam dominici baptismi descriptione corollarium, p. 65. For other sources see EDSMAN, *Le baptême de feu*, p. 84ff.

[8] Cf. CONNOLLY, «Jacob of Serug and the Diatessaron», p. 589; BROCK, «Baptismal Themes in the Writings of Jacob of Serug», p. 325ff.

[9] See a logion in the Gospel of Thomas: «Jesus spoke: 'whoever is close to me is close to the fire'.

[10] ܡܥܒܪܬܐ ܡܢ ܥܠܡܐ ܠܥܠܡܐ. ܡܢ ܥܠܡܐ ܦܓܪܢܝܐ ܠܥܠܡܐ ܪܘܚܢܝܐ, *Mēmrā* IX, p. $274_{12\text{-}13}$.

marcation line[11] between two different worlds. But in that which follows, the imagery of Philoxenos goes far beyond the meaning given to the Jordan in customary sacramental imagery[12]. It is important to delve more deeply into the vital portion of this *mēmrā*. Philoxenos describes the way of Jesus in the period from his baptism to his crucifixion as one in which he was on the way of his own righteousness, a way described by the term «perfection»[13].

The worldly Christians belong to the realm of the righteousness of the old covenant, but those who want to attain the level of perfection must withdraw from the world and live as ascetics[14]. This way is illustrated by typology, employing a series of mysteries in the life of Jesus: «And our Lord himself also in his own person depicted and showed unto us the end of the path and the beginning thereof, and in the Jordan laid down the boundary of them both; for he ended that path, which was after the law, in which he was journeying because he kept the law, and from it he began the path of perfection, which he showed in his own person, as it were for the teaching of those who loved perfection»[15]. The purpose was this «that he might give (us) his healthful commandments, and show forth the spiritual and perfect conversation»[16]. That Jesus went forth to the wilderness having nothing belonging to the world was an example[17], a paradigm for the true disciples, imitation of the way to abandon the world. Thereby Jesus demonstrated and lived out in advance the pattern of life for true disciples. Jesus going forth to the wilderness was excellent example of the demand for absolute poverty[18]. It was the «type of all perfection»[19] depicting the ultimate goal: «And he forsook the habi-

[11] With regard to the importance of the event Philoxenos employs the typology of the crossing of the Red Sea, *Mēmrā* IX, p. 274.

[12] About this imagery see DŒLGER, «Der Durchzug durch den Jordan als Sinnbild der christlichen Taufe», p. 70ff.; see also LUNDBERG, La typologie baptismale dans l'ancienne Église, p. 64ff.

[13] ܓܡܝܪܘܬܐ.

[14] PHILOXENOS, *Tractatus tres de Trinitate et incarnatione*, ed. VASCHALDE, p. 273.

[15] ܘܗܘ ܬܘܒ ܡܪܢ: ܒܩܢܘܡܗ ܨܪ ܘܚܘܝ ܠܢ ܫܘܠܡܗ ܕܐܘܪܚܐ ܘܫܘܪܝܗ. ܘܒܝܘܪܕܢܢ ܣܡ ܬܚܘܡܐ ܕܬܪܬܝܗܝܢ. ܟܕ ܫܠܡ ܠܗ ܐܘܪܚܐ ܕܒܬܪ ܢܡܘܣܐ ܗܝ ܕܪܕܐ ܗܘܐ ܒܗ. ܡܛܠ ܕܢܛܪ ܢܡܘܣܐ. ܘܡܢܗ ܫܪܝ ܒܐܘܪܚܐ ܕܓܡܝܪܘܬܐ: ܗܝ ܕܚܘܝ ܒܩܢܘܡܗ: ܐܝܟ ܠܬܠܡܝܕܘܬܐ ܕܗܢܘܢ ܕܪܚܡܝܢ ܠܓܡܝܪܘܬܐ, *Mēmrā* IX, p. 274_{3-8}.

[16] ܕܢܬܠ ܦܘܩܕܢܐ ܚܠܝܡܐ ܘܢܚܘܐ ܕܘܒܪܐ ܪܘܚܢܐ ܘܓܡܝܪܐ, *Mēmrā* IX, p. 275_{1-2}.

[17] ܛܘܦܣܐ, *ibid.*, p. 275^{608}.

[18] *Mēmrā* IX, p. 257, 275f.

[19] ܛܘܦܣܐ ܕܟܠܗ ܓܡܝܪܘܬܐ, *Mēmrā* VIII, p. 248_{20-21}.

tation of men, and went forth to the wilderness of John with all the multitudes. And why (did he do) these things except to teach those who were masters of wealth, and those who dwelt in the world, to go forth to the saints, and to run to the solitary dwellers?»[20].

g. *The Impact of Evagrios on the Terminology*

The impact of the system of Evagrios on Philoxenos can be ascertained at different levels in the works of Philoxenos, thus indicating its extent.

At the level of terminology, not all his writings display this influence evenly. There are writings in which Evagrian terminology is conspicuous. The preface which he wrote to a theological treatise[1], indeed, exhibits a heavy concentration of this terminology representing such conceptions as «knowledge»[2], «thoughts»[3], «keeping of commandments»[4], «seeing of his intellect»[5], «the place of knowledge»[6], and «knowledge of natures»[7]. His letter, the one sent to Paṭrīq, adds very important terms such as «contemplation»[8], «intellect»[9] and «seer»[10]. That a learned terminology of spirituality exercised its attraction on Philoxenos can be seen even in his paraenetical *mēmrē*. Phrases like «spiritual knowledge revealed to the spirituals»[11], «the world of spirituals»[12], «the purity of the intellect»[13], and «spiritual contemplation of everything»[14], can serve as vivid illustrations. This list of the terms and formulations belonging to the learned spirituality of Evagrios can certainly be

[20] *Mēmrā* VIII, p. 247f.

[1] *Tractatus tres de Trinitate et incarnatione*, ed. VASCHALDE I, p. 3ff.

[2] ܝܕܥܬܐ.

[3] ܚܘܫܒܐ.

[4] ܢܛܘܪܬ ܦܘܩܕܢܐ.

[5] ܚܙܬܐ ܕܗܘܢܗ.

[6] ܐܬܪܐ ܕܝܕܥܬܐ.

[7] ܝܕܥܬܐ ܕܟܝܢܐ.

[8] ܬܐܘܪܝܐ occurs here in 93 times.

[9] ܗܘܢܐ appears here in 83 times.

[10] ܚܙܝܐ occurs in 24 places.

[11] ܝܕܥܬܐ ܕܪܘܚ ܕܡܬܓܠܝܐ ܠܪܘܚܢܐ, *Mēmrā* XI, p. 475.

[12] ܥܠܡܐ ܕܪܘܚܢܐ, *ibid.*, XX, p. 500.

[13] ܕܟܝܘܬܐ ܕܗܘܢܗ, *ibid.*, XIII, p. 590.

[14] ܬܐܘܪܝܐ ܪܘܚܢܝܬܐ ܕܟܠܡܕܡ, *ibid.*, XIII, p. 591.

prolonged. However, even the terminology introduced gives us an idea of the extent of the impact made by Evagrios on Philoxenos.

It is entirely understandable that practical aspects of the doctrine of Evagrios as they are given expression in his Praktikos have exercised their inevitable attraction on the substance of this work concerning spiritual life. The very essence of the Evagrian system embracing faith, fear of God, continence, fundamental ascetic virtues, spiritual discipline in the struggles against the passions, all presented very forcefully, must have had a deep impact upon a kindred spirit such as Philoxenos. So much of this attesting to the growth of a true monk naturally attracted the bishop of Mabbūg.

h. *The Impact of Evagrios on Ascetic Notions*

However, the influence of Evagrios goes much deeper than the learned terminology and practical aspects in the doctrine of Evagrios. The writings of Philoxenos reveal the surprising fact that gnostic feature, which have their chief exponent in the Centuries by Evagrios, also have had their irresistible charm over him.

In the description of the progress on the road of the spiritual life, Philoxenos strongly emphasizes the notion of order[1], the order according to which the ascetic goes forward on the pathway of the mystical life. Regarding this philosophical investment in the way in which Philoxenos describes the road to gnosis, a paragraph from one of this exegetical works provides us with a very impressive illustration: «A man first believes and is baptized; and after baptism he begins to keep the commandments, holding within himself the fear of God ...»[2]. With regard to this keeping of the commandments, a central theme in his letter sent to Patrīq, Philoxenos says that it is an absolute condition without which no ascetic can proceed[3]. Now, according to Evagrios, faith is the

[1] ܛܟܣܐ, τάξις.

[2] [Syriac text], *Commentary on Matthew*, ed. WATT, p. $8_{3\text{-}5}$.

[3] *Lettre à Patricius*, éd LAVENANT, p. 746ff., 84ff. New sources have emerged in the following codices: Ms. Anḥel Mār Qyriaqos, a heavy folio size volume, has no signature; it was written in 1519 A.Gr., i.e. 1207/8; the letter appears on quire 22, fol. 1a - quire 23, fol. 8b; Ms. Jerusalem Mark 153, fol. 9a-13b; Ms. 222, fol. 66a-69a; Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 302, fol. 109a-130a; Ms. 320 (only a section); Ms. Mardin Orth. 271, fol. 61b-63b; Ms. 420, quire 6, fol. 4a-5b; Ms. 848, as nr. 1 in the corpus; VÖÖBUS, *Syriac Manuscripts*. Ms. Qarṭāmīn, bound in cloth, has no signature; its measurements are: 25 × 17cm; the letter appears on pages 9-28; Ms. Zaʿfarān 2/18, fol. 17b-75a; Ms. Qaraqōš, fol. 445a-447a.

initial step on the mystical road that leads to true knowledge. On this road the fear of God and the observance of the commandments absolutely become necessary[4].

«But the commandments are kept when a man overcomes every desire which either moves in the body or is stirred in the soul or is sewn in the intelligence by demons»[5]. This is the pattern of Evagrios. According to him, the keeping of the commandements is an instrument in the struggle against the passions. According to him, these passions are incited by demons[6].

«And when the desires and thoughts of them have been overcome, he who has overcome puts off, as Paul said, the old man with his deeds and puts on the new ... he stands in impassibility»[7]. At another place, Philoxenos writes: «The soul acquires sanity and this keeps (it) in the first purity; from there it elevates itself up to impassibility»[8]. Philoxenos, in describing the state of victoriousness, prepares us with a surprise in his terminology. Here there emerges a philosophical notion for the term *la-ḥašūšūtā*[9], the Greek ἀπάθεια which represents Stoic ontology through neo-Platonism, a term which Clement of Alexandria was the first to apply to the ascetics[10] and which was taken over with the same meaning by Origen[11]. Given this pre-history of the notion, it was Evagrios who developed it and built it into his system of ascetic-mystical theology, and this conception constitutes the central theme of his Praktikos[12]. Evagrios

[4] Πρακτικὴν δὲ συνίστησιν ἡ τήρησις τῶν ἐντολῶν· τούτων δὲ φύλαξ ὁ φόβος τοῦ Θεοῦ ὅστις γέννημα τῆς ὀρθῆς ἐστι πίστεως, *Practicos*, éd. GUILLAUMONT, p. 670.

[5] [Syriac text], *Commentary on Matthew*, ed. WATT, p. $8_{6\text{-}8}$.

[6] *Practicos*, éd. GUILLAUMONT VI, 34-35, 48.

[7] [Syriac text], *Commentary on Matthew*, ed. WATT, p. 8.

[8] *Lettre à Patricius*, p. 822, cf. p. 818.

[9] ܠܐ ܚܫܘܫܘܬܐ.

[10] Cf. RÜTHER, *Die sittliche Forderung der Apatheia*.

[11] HARB, «Les origines de la doctrine de la 'La Ḥašūšūtā' (Apatheia)», p. 227ff.

[12] This doctrine dominates his work in such a way that the first part of it (chapters 1-53) is devoted to the road which leads to the ἀπαθεία, and the second part (chapter 54-90) is devoted to its description; GUILLAUMONT, *Sources Chrétiennes*, p. 98.

states that the overcoming of struggles leads to the stage of impassibility [13].

Philoxenos even gives us an anatomy of this notion: «This not only is (one) not overcome by passions, but also (one) is not troubled by the memory of them» [14]. Evagrios describes the status of impassibility exactly in the same way: not only is the battle over the passions won, but that one who has become victorious is not troubled by the memory of them any more [15]. Be it added here that in another place supplementary light falls on this imagery, clarifying that which is meant here. Philoxenos says that at this stage of impassibility, the ascetic realizes his inner integrity, once the strife which was caused by the division of his soul which consists of three parts is behind him [16]. Now, finally these three rebellious parts of the soul coalesce in harmony [17]. Even this psychological idea of the three parts of the soul was borrowed by Philoxenos from Evagrios [18]. That makes it comprehensible why Evagrios defines ἀπάθεια as «soundness of the soul» [19].

«This makes him who becomes perfect and complete in it and the genuine image of God» [20]. The sequence of this pattern has the idea of the image of God occupying the same place in Evagrios [21].

Philoxenos continues by stating that from the stage of impassibility the ascetic attains to love: «And from here, as those who know the mystery of the act say, he attains to love» [22]. Elsewhere he writes: «It acquires the

[13] Ἡ μὲν τελεία τῇ ψυχῇ ἀπάθεια μετὰ τὴν νίκην τὴν κατὰ πάντων τῶν ἀντικειμένων τῇ πρακτικῇ δαιμόνων ἐγγίνεται· ἡ δὲ ἀτελὴς ἀπάθεια ὡς πρὸς τὴν δύναμιν τέως τοῦ παλαίοντος αὐτῇ λέγεται δαίμονος, *Practicos*, éd. GUILLAUMONT, p. 640.

[14] ܚܫ̈ܐ ܠܐ ܡܬܕܒܪܐ: ܐܠܐ ܐܦ ܗ̇ܝ، ܕܠܐ ܒܥܘܗܕܢܗܘܢ ܡܫܬܓܫܐ, *Commentary on Matthew*, p. $8_{13\text{-}15}$.

[15] Ἀπάθειαν ἔχει ψύχή, οὐχ ἡ μὴ πάσχουσα πρὸς τὰ πράγματα, ἀλλ' ἡ καὶ πρὸς τὰς μνήμας αὐτῶν ἀτάραχος διαμένουσα, *Practicos*, éd. GUILLAUMONT, p. 652.

[16] These parts are: ܡܠܝܠܘܬܐ «rational», ܪܓܬܐ «concupiscent», and ܚܡܬܐ, «irascible», *Lettre à Patricius*, p. 782.

[17] «These three things become harmoniously reunited», *ibid.*

[18] Τριμεροῦς δὲ τῆς λογικῆς ψυχῆς οὔσης κατὰ τὸν σοφὸν ἡμῶν διδάσκαλον, ὅταν μὲν ἐν τῷ λογιστικῷ μέρει γένηται ἡ ἀρετή, καλεῖται φρόνησις καὶ σύνεσις καὶ σοφία, *Practicos*, p. 680.

[19] Τὴν μὲν ἀπάθειαν ὑγείαν ἐροῦμεν εἶναι ψυχῆς, *ibid.*, p. 680.

[20] ܗܘ̇ ܕܥܒܕ ܠܐܢܫ ܕܗܘܐ ܒܗ ܓܡܝܪܐ ܘܡܫܡܠܝܐ ܘܨܠܡܐ ܫܪܝܪܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ, *Commentary on Matthew*, p. $8_{16\text{-}17}$.

[21] *Practicos*, p. 630.

[22] ܘܡܢ ܗܪܟܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪܝܢ ܝܕ̈ܥܝ ܐܪܙܗ ܕܣܘܥܪܢܐ ܡܛܐ ܠܚܘܒܐ, *Commentary on Matthew*, p. $8_{16\text{-}17}$.

impassibility of the soul which generates love» [23]. This is exactly the way Evagrios describes progress on the mystical road [24]: «Impassibility has love for its daughter» [25].

In the same paragraph, Philoxenos describes the final stage in this progress in the following way: «As the image of God he comes, without a veil, upon the knowledge of all things which have become» [26]. The final act in this stage-by-stage advancement is «knowledge», «a knowledge which appears after the purity of the intellect» [27]. This knowledge is «spiritual knowledge» [28]. The soul of the ascetic is no longer that of «a questioner but a seer» [29]. The soul «is elevated to the contemplation which is the spiritual knowledge of all that exists, be it visible, be it invisible» [30]. Therefore, solitaries become «like angels» [31]. All this has been fashioned by the thought pattern of Evagrios. According to him, when the solitary leaves the stage of ascetic practice and reaches the gnostic stage, he enters into true knowledge of all created things [32]. This is gnosis, spiritual knowledge. The solitary ends in angelic [33] status [34].

With regard to contemplation, additional interesting observations can be made. It is surprising to read that Philoxenos speaks of a complex esoteric picture of five contemplations [35], even though this speculation has been taken over from Evagrios who has the same complex esoteric picture of contemplations [36].

As the foregoing comparative analysis amply shows, the fundamental scheme behind the doctrine of ascetic spirituality of Philoxenos stems

[23] *Lettre à Patricius*, p. 818.

[24] Ἀπαθείας ἔγγονον ἀγάπη· ἀπάθεια δέ ἐστιν ἄνθος τῆς πρακτικῆς· πρακτικὴν δὲ συνίστησιν ἡ τήρησις τῶν ἐντολῶν· τούτων δὲ φύλαξ ὁ φόβος τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὅστις γέννημα τῆς ὀρθῆς ἐστι πίστεως, *Practicos*, p. 670.

[25] *Ibid.*

[26] ܐܝܟ ܨܠܡܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܦܓܥ ܕܠܐ ܬܚܦܝܬܐ ܒܝܕܥܬܐ ܕܟܠܗܝܢ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܗܘ̈ܝ، ܥܒ̈ܕܐ, *Commentary on Matthew*, p. $8_{20\text{-}21}$.

[27] *Lettre à Patricius*, p. 820.

[28] ܝܕܥܬܐ ܕܪܘܚ, *ibid.*, p. 758, 768.

[29] *Ibid.*, p. 808.

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 828.

[31] *Mēmrā* VII, ed. BUDGE, p. 192f.; VIII, p. 223; IX, p. 277; XI, p. 424f.; 455.

[32] *Practicos*, p. 492.

[33] GUILLAUMONT, *Les «Kephalaia Gnostica»*, p. 249ff.

[34] *Les six Centuries des Kephalaia Gnostica* II, 32, 88; III, 4, éd. GUILLAUMONT, p. 73, 95, 99.

[35] *Lettre à Patricius*, p. 820.

[36] *Les six Centuries*, éd. GUILLAUMONT I, 27.

from Evagrios. These are doctrines which have entered into the thought of Philoxenos and which he made his own.

Another aspect in the concepts of mystical spirituality demands special observations. It concerns the idea of the separation of the soul from the body. Since the soul is mixed with the body, it cannot act freely according to its fine impulses and higher aspirations. The body is an impediment; it submits the soul to its desires and impulses[37]. Therefore: «It is necessary that we separate the soul from the body before (the time that) the body would not be separated from the soul, so that we would not be precluded from the divine life»[38]. The source for this idea of the separation, too, has been borrowed from Evagrios. For him, the body is a tomb of the soul[39]. Therefore separation of the soul from the body is inevitable and anchoretism with its acts of mortification is the death of the body[40]. In this idea of the separation of the soul from the body in the process of purification to be carried out through the practice of the virtues, Evagrios was deeply influenced by the Platonistic thoughtworld.

Thus the «order» of the ascent through ascetic practices and of the road of the mystical spirituality of Philoxenos has been fashioned according to the models shaped by Evagrios.

i. *Philoxenos' Own Basic Criteria*

Nevertheless, the statement just made must be qualified. It must be added that Philoxenos, while using the terminology and ideas from the thoughtworld of Evagrios, did not do so without reservation. In truth, he also reveals his independent assessment and critical sense. While this is clearer in other areas of his theological speculation[1], in the area of spirituality and mystical philosophy he has been much more open to Evagrios. Yet his openness to the ideas of Evagrios appears in some way to be more limited in his letter written to a monk in Edessa named Patrīq. This letter has been called by Hausherr a remarkable «mise au point» of Evagrian mysticism, «acknowledging the essential data of Origenistic

[37] *Mēmrā, Discourses*, XII, p. 511; XII, p. 415.

[38] *Ibid.*, XII, p. 511f.

[39] Τάφος δὲ ψυχῆς σῶμα, *Commentarius in Psalm* XLVIII, 12, ed. MIGNE, col. 1445.

[40] Σῶμα μὲν χωρίσαι ψυχῆς, μόνου ἐστὶ τοῦ συνδήσαντος· ψυχὴν δὲ ἀπὸ σώματος, καὶ τοῦ ἐφιεμένου τῆς ἀρετῆς. Τὴν γὰρ ἀναχώρησιν μελέτην θανάτου καὶ φυγὴν τοῦ σώματος οἱ Πατέρες ἡμῶν ὀνομάζουσιν, *Practicos*, p. 618.

[1] About cosmology, anthropology, christology and soteriology, see HARB, «L'attitude de Philoxène de Mabboug à l'égard de la spiritualité savante d'Évagre», p. 142ff.

gnosis but stopping them from crossing the limits of orthodoxy»[2]. It becomes apparent from the tenor of this letter that certain Origenistic, Evagrian and gnostic ideas had evoked disquieting phenomena in certain monastic communities. Facing such a situation, Philoxenos could not look upon this development idly and thus acted in order to warn about dangers in the system of Evagrian thought and to guide Syrian spirituality along traditional lines. That which appears in the letter sent to Patrīq emerges far more strongly in the letter sent to Abraham and Orestes which unfolds an open attack against vain speculations in Evagrios.

With all the influence of Evagrian speculation so freely adopted and absorbed in his system of spirituality, Philoxenos goes his own way in one fundamental respect. His scheme of mystical spirituality integrates the christological doctrine in its specifically Monophysite dress into his system. These ideas about the work of Christ open up an entirely new and most essential dimension. According to it, spiritualization is intimately related to the whole economy of the incarnation so that the transformation of created beings comes about through the mystery of the incarnation. Only in this way can the renewal and gathering up the creation in the body of the Logos take place. The achievement of contemplation by an ascetic is not something which can take place in isolation but only through the purification and renewal of his nature through union with the incarnate Logos. Any understanding of this union with the incarnate Logos is only possible by a look at the very heart of his Monophysite christological vision. According to this, this specifically Monophysite grasp of the Logos that has become flesh is mysteriously present not only in his humanity itself[3]. That which gives new meaning to the new creation is a vision of God in the following way: «Complete in privation, rich in poverty, the Logos in the flesh, consubstantial (with God) in becoming, and God in humanity[4]»[5]. With such a vision, it becomes clear why Monophysitic doctrine had such a profound attraction among the Syrian monks and why during the trials

[2] «Contemplation et sainteté, une remarquable mise au point par Philoxène», p. 175.

[3] *Commentaire du Prologue Johannique*, éd. DE HALLEUX, p. 58.

[4] Or: «human nature».

[5] ܓܡܝܪܐ ܒܚܣܝܪܘܬܐ : ܥܬܝܪܐ ܒܡܣܟܢܘܬܐ : ܡܠܬܐ ܒܒܣܪ : ܘܒܪ ܐܘܣܝܐ ܒܗܘܝܐ : ܘܐܠܗܐ ܒܐܢܫܘܬܐ, *ibid.*, p. 239.

and persecutions most of them did not hesitate to sacrifice their all and to suffer in order to defend their christological creed[6]. They were deeply convinced that such a tenet was a faith decision and gave them the real and ultimate meaning for their monastic calling. The new creation is made possible only through the deified humanity of the Logos which gives human nature new possibilities. This particular salvific economy, in fact, inaugurates spiritualization and deification of the new man[7].

2. The Role of Evagrios

a. *Introduction*

Evagrios[1] is an eminent figure in the history of spirituality. He left his position as a celebrated preacher in Constantinople in order to acquire real wisdom in the desert of Nitria[2]. He found such wisdom in ascetic spirituality and proceeded to develop it into a system of his own. This system does not need to be discussed here because his spirituality and thoughtworld has been extensively treated[3].

The translation of the works of Evagrios into Syriac[4] was soon undertaken. The oldest manuscripts which have been preserved testify that the Syriac versions of his writings were already in existence at the beginning of the sixth century, which in turn suggests that the initial work of translation may reach back into the fifth century.

The reasons for such early and extended translation into Syriac were compelling. The appearance of Evagrios on the monastic scene was a real event. He was the first monk in the history of monasticism who engaged himself in such large scale literary activity. A prolific writer, the quantum of his literary works evoked amazement[5]. Even the range of his creativity

[6] DE HALLEUX, «Monophysitismus und Spiritualität nach dem Johanneskommentar des Philoxenus», p. 362ff.

[7] «Nicht aus einem blinden Fanatismus heraus geschah es also, dass zahlreiche monophytische Mönche nicht zögerten, in der Verfolgung alles zu opfern um ein christologisches Bekenntnis zu schützen, das ihrer Meinung nach zuinnerst mit dem Sinn ihrer monastischen Berufung verknüpft war», *ibid.*, p. 366.

[1] Evagrios came from Pontus (346-399).

[2] ALTANER-STUIBER, *Patrologie*, p. 226ff.; QUASTEN, *Patrology*, III, p. 31ff.

[3] RAHNER, «Die geistliche Lehre des Evagrius», p. 21ff.; A. et C. GUILLAUMONT, *Traité Pratique ou Le Moine*, p. 38ff.; LOUTH, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition*, p. 199ff.

[4] BAUMSTARK, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, p. 86ff.

[5] SOCRATES, *Historia eccl.* IV,23; GENNADIUS, *De viris illustribus* 11, ed. RICHARDSON.

was found to be something admirable: his writings began with ascetic treatises for the beginners, then covered every aspect of ascetic life or advanced spiritual life, and ended with such great works as the Kephalaia gnostica. His literary creation[6], variegated as to subject matters, constituted a real milestone in the history of literary genre. Indeed, this very rich repository of material was at the disposal of the translators even in different forms[7].

The value of Evagrios' literary creation was enhanced by its literary qualities. In all of his works, he appears as a born master of the word and refined expression. His dialectic arts and rhetorical skills were widely admired[8]. His contemporaries considered his talents to be exceptional. The remains of his writings provide their own eloquent testimony. Let it be added here that the very terse, concise form of expression which he cultivated as the basic element of his Centuries made Evagrios the master to be imitated. His literary legacy thus won attention for its style[9].

Nevertheless, the real attraction of Evagrios' writings is to be found elsewhere. It is rooted deeply in the power of this written word; that which he wrote grew out of intense life experiences. Palladios tells us that Evagrios in the course of many years first purified his intellect of all the passions, and only after having attained the charisma of wisdom and the distinction of the spirits did he arrive at the stage of *apatheia*[10]. Not until then did he inaugurate his literary activities. In his writings he wanted to share the deepest things he had experienced and fought out. With respect to temptations, his vita in Coptic in particular brings out the fact that Evagrios was a person able to teach others how to overcome every aspect involved in a concrete way[11]. That is to say, Evagrios was found by his readers to be a genuine teacher and trustworthy guide through all the complications in spiritual life. That was the way Evagrios became a teacher of spirituality and the master of philosophical or speculative mysticism. Given such dynamics, he was able to shape the whole of Christian spirituality in the east as well as the west, across all confessional boundaries.

[6] GUILLAUMONT, «Evagrius», col. 1091ff.

[7] Evagrios himself has formed his originally independent writings into greater works like the Praktikos, the Gnostikos and the Kephalaia Gnostika as a trilogy. GUILLAUMONT, *Les «Kephalaia Gnostica»*, p. 381f.

[8] PALLADIOS, *Historia Lausiaca*, ed. BUTLER, p. 117.

[9] GUILLAUMONT, *Traité pratique*, p. 428ff.

[10] *Historia Lausiaca*, p. 120.

[11] *De Historia Lausiaca*, éd. AMÉLINEAU, p. 113f.

Finally it should be added that the translations of the writings of Evagrios into Syriac was fortuitous in the extreme, inasmuch as his writings for the most part did not survive in the original Greek; the unknown translators have performed a very great service for us in preserving these materials in Syriac.

b. *The Oldest Collections*

In order to give some insight into the riches of these ascetic and mystical materials made available to the Syrians and into the range of his writings, it is necessary to introduce at least the oldest collections.

The earliest manuscript[1] with the works of Evagrios comes from the sixth century[2]. Unfortunately, it has suffered so heavily that only eleven leaves of this very precious vellum codex written in a very impressive Estrangela script have survived. This collection begins[3] with the treatise «On asceticism», followed by the one entitled «On the way of life of perfection». The conclusion of the Six Centuries follows. Of the remainder, only two treatises can be identified. One is «Answers from the holy scriptures against the demons that tempt us» and the second bears the title «On teachers and disciples».

A codex which has preserved a large collection of works of Evagrios comes from the sixth or seventh century[4]. The collection[5] begins with his «Teaching (addressed) to the brother-solitaries in the desert», an extensive work divided into a hundred and a half sections. Of this work, fragmentary portions are extant in Greek[6]. This treatise is followed by a discourse addressed to Eulogios. Two treatises come next. One is: «On the eight evil thoughts» and the second is: «On the eight evil passions». Then there is a long row of shorter and longer treatises on a variety of subjects — on the spiritual world[7], passions[8], virtues[9], perfection[10], monastic life[11] and special ordinances for monks[12].

[1] Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,635, fol. 5-15.
[2] WRIGHT, *Catalogue* II, p. 449f.
[3] The collection is headed by the life of Evagrios.
[4] Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,578, fol. 1-195, WRIGHT, *Catalogue* II, p. 445ff.
[5] Also this collection is headed by the Vita of Evagrios.
[6] *Bibliotheca*, ed. GALLAND VII. See WRIGHT, *Catalogue* II, p. 445.
[7] Nr. 28, 34, 35: On demons, nr. 29-30; On angels.
[8] Nr. 13, 20: On passions; nr. 15, 16, 18, 22, 41, 42: Exhortations.
[9] Nr. 6, 7, 27: On thoughts; nr. 14: On humility; nr. 21, 38: On prayer, and nr. 37: On silence.
[10] Nr. 11: On the just and perfect; nr. 33: On perfection.
[11] Nr. 10: On monastic life; nr. 23, 24: On teachers and disciples.
[12] Nr. 9: Exhortations to brothers dwelling in a monastery.

Towards the end, the Six Centuries is introduced[13]. Letters from his hand were chosen to bring the collection to its completion. First the letter of Anatolios[14], and then that to a virgin[15] followed by a corpus of letters[16] which, by the way, seems to have been the earliest collection of the writings of Evagrios. The letter to Melania brings this group to a conclusion[17].

Regarding other collections of the writings of Evagrios, it suffices to say that they were filled out with other treatises drawn from the abundance of his writings; this allowed longer sections to be amplified by treatises different from those already mentioned, as can readily be seen in a parchment manuscript[18] which contains a segment of such treatises[19].

c. *The Florilegia*

The deep respect with which the writings of Evagrios were held is reflected in the collections of ascetic writings, whether of Byzantine, Egyptian or Syrian origin, which constituted reading material in the monasteries and cells of the solitaries. Insight into some of these sources can help us to understand the contribution made by Evagrios.

The earliest such document appears in a manuscript[1] written in the year 533/4[2]. This corpus is headed by the Sixth Centuries[3] followed by a treatise «On these (things) that happen in dreams»[4]. Then comes the Asceticon dedicated to Anatolios, a work which includes a «Discourse on the eight evil thoughts» and then «Answers from the holy scriptures to the demons that tempt us». This cycle of writings is concluded by the vita of Evagrios ascribed to Basilios. The cycle which follows includes

[13] Included as nr. 31.
[14] Nr. 40: Regarding the dress of the solitaries in Egypt.
[15] Included as nr. 43.
[16] Inserted as nr. 44; the corpus comprises 61 letters; excerpts, mostly small, of 7 letters in Greek have been found in the florilegia by C. GUILLAUMONT, *Traité Pratique*, p. 245, 257.
[17] Nr. 45; cf. FRANKENBERG, *Evagrius Ponticus*; VITESTAM, *Seconde partie du traité*.
[18] Ms. Paris Syr. 378 is a codex which comes from the 8th or 9th cent.
[19] «On the love of money», «On anger», «On grief», «On depression», «On vain glory», and «On pride», fol. 8aff.
[1] Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 12,175, fol. 81a-145a.
[2] WRIGHT, *Catalogue* II, p. 633ff.
[3] See page 143.
[4] *Bibliotheca*, ed. GALLAND VII, p. 563.

treatises on thoughts[5], admonitions[6], and exhortations[7]. Here the treatise «Against the eight evil thoughts» has been chosen to close this collection.

In this composite volume, selections of the writings of Evagrios have been combined with selections from other ascetic authors, mainly from Egypt[8].

Just as it was necessary to introduce the oldest sources, so is it advisable to single those writings which were at once the most frequently used and the most popular on the reading lists of the ascetics. Such a survey would shed light upon the role played by the writings of Evagrios.

«A Discourse on perfection»[9] was written to Eulogios. In the transmission of Greek manuscripts it has been ascribed to Nilos[10]. It is attested, too, by Nicephoros Kallistos who speaks of it with praise[11]. In some of the manuscript it bears a different title[12].

Another very popular treatise bears the title: «On the eight evil passions»[13] which has been ascribed in the Greek tradition to Nilos[14]. Another treatise on the same subject bearing the title: «On the passions»[15] has also enjoyed wide popularity.

«Against the eight evil thoughts»[16] comprises eight discourses composed of scriptural material. Gennadius reports that he had translated this work into Latin[17]. The version which he prepared in Latin has not survived.

«Hortatory words to the brothers who are living together in a monastery»[18].

«On monasticism and the tranquility in it»[19], of which some remnants

[5] «On thoughts of every kind», «On the distinction of thoughts», and «On the judgement of thoughts».

[6] «Admonitions to one who walks with God».

[7] «Exhortation to the intellect», «A letter of exhortation», «A treatise of exhortation».

[8] Marcos the Monk, Palladios, Hieronymus, Macarios the Great, Ammonios and Basilios.

[9] Πρὸς Εὐλόγιον.

[10] *Nili abbatis tractatus*, ed. SUARESIUS, p. 408ff.; ed. MIGNE, col. 1093ff.

[11] *Historia eccl.*, XIV, 54.

[12] «A discourse of teaching to Eulogios».

[13] Περὶ τῶν ὀκτὼ πνευμάτων τῆς πονηρίας.

[14] *Nili opera*, ed. SUARESIUS, p. 456; ed. MIGNE, col. 1145f.

[15] Πάθη.

[16] Ἀντιρρητικός, ed. MIGNE, col. 1271ff.

[17] «Adversus octo principalium vitiorum suggestiones ... octo ex sanctarum tantum scripturarum testimoniis opposuit libros», GENNADIUS, *De viris illustribus* 11.

[18] Στιχηρά, *Bibliotheca*, ed. GALLAND VII, p. 578; ed. MIGNE, col. 1277.

[19] Τῶν κατὰ μοναχῶν τὰ αἰτία καὶ ἡ καθ' ἡσυχίαν τούτων παράθεσις.

have survived in its original[20]. In some manuscripts the treatise appears under a different title[21].

«Concerning teacher and disciple»[22] in the Greek tradition has been ascribed to Nilos[23]. In some manuscripts it bears the title: «A treatise to the *rabbānē* and disciples». This work was written for abbots, masters of the novices and novices — that accounts in large part for the attraction of readers.

«Teaching (addressed) to the brothers-solitaries in the desert» is one of the main works, namely, his Praktikos[24] in 151 sections. Its subtitles include: «On the eight evil thoughts», «On the passions», and «Hortatory precepts».

We are fortunate that this quantum of material has been enriched. Previously, unknown witnesses which our research has brought to light in the Syrian Orient has supplemented this corpus of ascetic florilegia. These manuscripts have even preserved treatises which do not appear in the collections of known works of Evagrios[25].

d. *The Six Centuries*

Regarding Evagrios' Six Centuries[1] in Syriac, interesting phenomena have come to light. These hang together with the discovery made by Guillaumont. He found a second version of this work[2] in addition to the one already known, and this work arouses special interest in view of the fact that its content, presenting dogmatic as well as ascetic materials, differs from other writings of his.

Only a single manuscript[3] has preserved a version which represents an

[20] *Bibliotheca*, ed. GALLAND VII, p. 566; ed. MIGNE, col. 1252ff.

[21] «A letter of admonition».

[22] Περὶ διδασκάλων καὶ μαθητῶν.

[23] «Un opuscule inédit attribué à Nil», éd. VAN DEN VEN, p. 73ff.

[24] Μοναχὸς ἢ περὶ πρακτικῆς, *Bibliotheca*, ed. GALLAND VII, p. 554ff., ed. MIGNE, col. 1222, 1271.

[25] Ms. Atšaneh 125; Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 56 and 181. Ms. Aleppo Orth. 102. Ms. Behnām 8/6; Ms. Mār Mattai 27; Ms. Mosul Chald. 92, p. 1-109 is now Ms. Baghdad Patr. 708. Ms. Anḥel has no signature, consists of 37 *kūrrāsē* written in 1519 A. Gr. and is bound in brown leather; Ms. Mardin Orth. 157, 420, 422 and 438; Ms. Midyat Melki has no signature; its measurement are 17,5 × 25cm., bound in red cloth.

[1] Γνωστικὰ προβλήματα.

[2] *Les six centuries des «Kephalaia Gnostica»*, éd. GUILLAUMONT.

[3] Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 17,167, fol. 18a-56a, WRIGHT, *Catalogue* II, p. 676ff.

accurate translation of the work — as over against a group of manuscripts containing the common version. Indeed, both versions differ from each other[4]. The real significance of this version becomes clear when it is noted that it not only renders exactly the Greek original insofar as that is extant in fragments but also agrees with certain anti-Origenist anathemas adopted by the council held in the year 553[5]. The new recension represents an accurate translation of the Six Centuries of Evagrios.

The discovery of this Syriac version has opened up new perspectives for understanding the history of the influence of Evagrios upon the Greeks as well as upon the Syrians; it also throws light upon the complicated history of this work among the Syrians. It has removed the veil from a real puzzle: whereas among the Greek Evagrios, as a disciple of Origen, had fallen under condemnation, among the Syrian whose attitude towards Origen was also negative, Evagrios enjoyed an immense reputation. This enigma could now be resolved. The version of the Six Centuries which came into the hands of the Syrians was not an exact translation but an adjusted text, one which had been made dogmatically palatable to the Syrians by removing the Origenism of Evagrios. The resultant product actually was therefore not a translation of the work but a modified version of the original. Only in this form did the Six Centuries become known to the Syrians. This is demonstrated by the fact that whenever the text of the Six Centuries has been quoted by the Syrians, namely by Philoxenos, Isḥāq of Ninive, Dadīšōʿ of Bēt Qaṭrayē, ʿAbdīšōʿ and Joseph Ḥazzāyā, Nestorian mystics of the seventh and eight centuries, and other sources[6], this common version was used. It was also the same recension which served as the base for the commentaries on this work by Bābai in the seventh century and Dionysios bar Ṣalībī in the twelfth century[7]. All these sources show no evidence of the original version. The Syrians were acquainted only with the purged, adjusted edition of Evagrios. Thus the version of Evagrios which was made available to the Syrians for the first time was heavily doctored in such

[4] Of 540 sentences only 123 are identical, and in 417 sentences these two versions display greater or smaller deviations; in 207 sentences the differences affect more or less the meaning and 54 are entirely different; GUILLAUMONT, *Les «Kephalaia Gnostica»*, p. 200.

[5] *Ibid.*, 200ff.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 227ff.

[7] An unknown witness emerges in Ms. Istanbul Maryam Ana, p. 392-648. This manuscript has no signature; it was written in the month of Šebāṭ 2008 A. GR., i.e. in the year 1697 A. D.; the codex is bound in red leather and its measurements are 22,5 × 15,5cm.

areas as christology, eschatology and cosmology[8]. In other words, the Syrians were not introduced to the real Evagrios when they received the translation of his Six Centuries[9].

It is this adjusted version that was initially put into circulation. That is true not only among the Syrians but also among the Armenians; it is the adjusted version which was translated into Armenian, as a very ancient version attests[10].

In view of the circumstances described, the question of the date of the earliest translation in particular is most intriguing. The oldest manuscript which presents this text[11] testifies, according to its colophon — though it has suffered — that it was written in the year 533/4[12]. This points to an even earlier date; it is safe to conclude that the first decades of the sixth century come into account. However, this version may be older still. Support for this comes from the Armenian version which was made not from the Greek original[13] but from the first Syriac version[14]. Thus the adjusted version must be prior to the Armenian version which, according to all indications, was made in the fifth century[15].

The question of the authorship of this earliest translation is equally interesting. The search for a possible author to date has yielded no conclusion result. Jaʿqōb of Serūg[16] cannot come into account since this reference in question appears in a tradition which is obtruse[17]. The candidature of Philoxenos of Mabbūg has also been raised[18]. Indeed, the theory that the author was none other than Philoxenos has been lauded[19]. But as a priori it involves insurmountable difficulties. Philoxenos' knowledge of Greek alone constitutes a serious obstacle[20].

[8] GUILLAUMONT, *Les «Kephalaia Gnostica»*, p. 231ff.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 215ff.

[10] Ed. SARGHISIAN.

[11] Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 12,175.

[12] WRIGHT, *Catalogue* II, p. 637.

[13] This is against the assumption taken by the editor of the Armenian text.

[14] So HAUSHERR.

[15] The important fact is that the traces of the influence of Evagrios appear in the authors who belong to the so-called «Golden Age», as particularly Johannes Mandakuni and Eznik of Kolb, SARGHISIAN.

[16] BAR ʿEBRAYA, *Chronicon eccl.*, ed. ABBELOOS-LAMY I, p. 191.

[17] He is reported to have translated the work at the request of Gīwargī, the bishop of the Arabs, «who was his disciple». Gīwargī could not have been his disciple since he lived several generations later. About him see page 000.

[18] GUILLAUMONT, *Les «Kephalaia Gnostica»*, p. 202ff.

[19] Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 12,175.

[20] GUILLAUMONT, *Les «Kephalaia Gnostica»*, p. 202ff.

His acquaintance with the Greek fathers certainly comes through Syriac versions of those writings which were sufficiently available at that time. Other indications, too, point in the same direction[21]. Even the intrinsic evidence militates against this theory. An examination of the content, particularly with respect to cosmology, eschatology and spirituality, also leads to a negative result[22]. Finally, the foundation upon which the theory is built is not tenable[23]. Serious considerations such as these do not allow us to see in Philoxenos the author who made the Six Centuries in its dogmatically adjusted form available to the Syrian world.

The most recent theory that this version of the Six Centuries was made in Edessa during the fifth century[24] in the School of Edessa, famous for the translation activities performed there[25], remains sheer speculation.

The Syrians could not know until a later point in time when the authentic and accurate translation was produced that the very first translation of the Six Centuries was a tampered and reshaped version. Indeed, the origin of the later version contains problems not less complicated than those associated with the first. As for the origin of the accurate version, we have no witness other than the manuscript which has preserved it. It does not contain a colophon but on palaeographical grounds the script can be assigned to the sixth or the seventh century[26]. Due to the lack of any evidence regarding its author, we must be content with the hypothesis that Sargīs of Resʿainā, well known as the translator of the works of Pseudo-Dionysios Areopagita[27], could perhaps have been the translator[28].

[21] The theory has been regarded as plausible by HARB, «L'attitude», p. 155; CHESNUT, *Three Monophysite Christologies*, p. 106f.

[22] When it became necessary to produce a more accurate version of the New Testament, he did not want to undertake this task but entrusted his chorepiscopus, Polycarp, with this very important undertaking. VÖÖBUS, *Early Versions of the NT*, p. 103ff.

[23] WATT, «Philoxenus and the Old Syriac Version of Evagrius' Centuries», p. 77f.

[24] See page 149.

[25] WATT, «Philoxenus and the Old Syriac Version of Evagrius' Centuries», p. 76.

[26] About the lively translation activities carried out by Ḥībā, Kūmī and Probā in the School of Edessa, see VÖÖBUS, *History of the School of Nisibis*.

[27] WRIGHT, *Catalogue* II, p. 678.

[28] GUILLAUMONT, *Les «Kephalaia Gnostica»*, p. 222ff.

3. Stephanos Bar Ṣūdāylē and his Speculations

a. *Data About His Life*

Among the figures which Syrian monasticism produced in such great variety, Stephanos Bar Ṣūdaylē, a celebrated mystical author, occupies a special position.

Data on him are very fragmentary and leave many questions open. These gaps are the more painful in view of the great issues which surface in the currents and subcurrents of Syrian spirituality and mysticism. Edessene in origin, Bar Ṣūdaylē had become a monk. It is very fortunate that a letter written by Jaʿqōb of Serūg to this young monk has been preserved. The person reflected on the pages of this letter[1] is an impressive figure. There is portrayed a monk of reputation, whose sanctity of life and good works are recognized. As «a pious man» and «a friend of God» who «walks in glorious works», he is described as a person spiritually equipped — «it is honorable for your intelligent soul that in the love of God you sow daily excellent things unto the hope of God». Regrettably, all these terms of respect, all this eloquent talk do not tell what we want to know about Bar Ṣūdaylē. However, the terms of praise which Jaʿqōb does bestow on this monk indicate his reputation. But one note appears to be ominous: «Let not the good you have done, dwell upon your mind, lest it prevent you from doing what you have still to do»[2]. Jaʿqōb of Serūg encourages his correspondent to persevere in the works of ascetic life reminding him of the vanity of the world, of the brevity of life and of the glorious recompense which awaits him.

As has already been indicated in the letter of Jaʿqōb of Serūg, there seems to be a disquieting note, an indication that Bar Ṣūdaylē was captivated by his own peculiar views. It is reported that for a certain period of time he was attracted to a certain person known for his heretical opinions. Philoxenos calls him Johannes the Egyptian. This note in the letter of Jaʿqōb of Serūg has even been found sufficient to build the ascertion upon it that in his early life Bar Ṣūdaylē had journeyed to Egypt and spent a portion of his early career there[3] —

[1] *Mar Yaqub*, ed. FROTHINGHAM, p. 10ff.; *Epistulae*, ed. OLINDER, p. 2ff.

[2] ܘܠܐ ܢܣܡܟ ܥܠ ܪܥܝܢܟ ܗܠܝܢ ܛܒ̈ܬܐ ܕܥܒ̈ܕܬ ܠܟ. ܕܠܐ ܢܬܟܠܝܟ ܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܥܕܟܝܠ ܐܝܬ ܠܡܥܒܕ, p. 24.

[3] FROTHINGHAM, *Stephen bar Sudhaili*, p. 56.

though not everyone would regard this as sufficient for such far-reaching postulations[4]. It is reported that, during his stay in Edessa, Bar Ṣūdaylē had already begun to disseminate his heretical opinions. The issue is not fully clear but it seems that he was compelled to leave Edessa for this reason and that he went to Palestine. It is probable that this took place between the years 509 and 512. However, he stayed in touch with the disciples he had left behind at the Mesopotamian metropolis and the monastic communities there.

A chronological clue which comes from Philoxenos is very welcome. Philoxenos wrote a letter to two presbyters living in Edessa, namely to Abraham and to Orestes regarding Bar Ṣūdaylē. It was written for the purpose of warning them about his views which appeared to be very extravagant. This letter must have been written before the year 518[5] so that we may reckon with the time between 512 and 515. In this letter Philoxenos refers to Bar Ṣūdaylē as the one «who departed from among us some time since, and now resides in the country of Jerusalem»[6]. In this way are we given at least some orientation about the happenings in the early life of Bar Ṣūdaylē.

His departure from Edessa has been embellished with legendary traditions[7]; whether they have any historical kernel is very difficult to establish. His destination is plausible enough since his new abode in the vicinity of Jerusalem was related to the presence of Origenistic monks about which we fortunately have some information. A kinship with these monks must have been an important factor in determining his new residence.

We are informed about the activities of the Origenistic monks to the effect that in the year 514 the first incident of conflict caused by these monks took place in the New Laura[8]. We also learn that such incidents and provocations deeply troubled the monasteries in Palestine and that they lasted until the official condemnation of Origenism[9]. The atmos-

[4] It has been sugested by Guillaumont that this person was Johannes of Apamea.

[5] In the year 518 Philoxenos was expelled from his episcopal seat.

[6] *Letter of Mar Xenaias*, ed. FROTHINGHAM, p. $28_{4\text{-}5}$.

[7] It is reported that Bar Ṣūdaylē had gone to Philoxenos in order to seduce him with his views about the final punishment as well as recompensation which do not last longer than a period of time. Philoxenos is reported to have told him that this is the view for which Origen was condemned. Then «he took his books during the night and fled to Palestine», MICHAEL SYRUS, *Chronique* II, p. 249f.

[8] CYRIL OF SCYTHOPOLIS, *Vita Euthymii*, ed. SCHWARTZ, p. 124f.

[9] On the ecumenical council held in the year 553.

phere created by such ascetic activists provided a spiritual home for the monk from Edessa.

The question whether his stay in Palestine turned out to be temporary or not, must remain open even though there is a record which claims to have the answer. Whether a note by Bar ʿEbrāyā which says that Bar Ṣūdaylē lived in Edessa at the time Sargīs was patriarch of Antioch[10], that means from 541-543, deserves our trust cannot be decided. If Bar ʿEbrāyā is correct, then Bar Ṣūdaylē returned to his hometown, Edessa.

b. *Bar Ṣūdaylē's Activities*

In Bar Ṣūdaylē we meet an original personality. Despite disparaging and even bitter comments by Philoxenos, he is presented on the pages of this letter as a learned man, calling him «Stephanos the learned man»[1], versed in the study of the scriptures and energetic in the propaganda of disseminating his views. He is also a prolific author. Philoxenos also cannot suppress the impression that Bar Ṣūdaylē must have exercised considerable personal charm in attracting numerous and active disciples. Bar Ṣūdaylē must have been a person who claimed an extraordinary authority for himself as a result of his pneumatic experiences, keeping alive traditions of the charismatics in the monastic movement. This can be deduced from the emotional words of Philoxenos. In connection with his comments on certain psalms composed by Bar Ṣūdaylē, Philoxenos states: «In which he also glorifies himself and ascribes to himself revelations and visions, and says that to him alone is it given to understand the scriptures correctly»[2].

From the same source written by Philoxenos we learn something about the production of literary works by Bar Ṣūdaylē. Philoxenos speaks of his «letters and books». Repeatedly he refers to the variety of his literary activity consisting of letters, books and treatises. His commentary on certain psalms[3] which Philoxenos had seen and read has been already mentioned. But of all the manifold writings mentioned by Philoxenos, nothing has survived.

[10] *Chronicon eccl.*, ed. ABBELOOS-LAMY I, col. 221.

[1] ܣܦܪܐ, *Letter of Mār Xenaias*, ed. FROTHINGHAM, p. 28.

[2] ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܐܦ ܡܫܬܒܗܪ ܘܡܚܠܛ ܥܠ ܢܦܫܗ ܓܠܝܢܐ ܘܚܙܘܢܐ ܘܐܡܪ ܕܠܗ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܐܬܝܗܒܬ ܗܝܕܐ ܕܢܣܬܟܠ ܬܪܝܨܐܝܬ ܠܟܬܒܐ, *ibid.*, p. $46_{3\text{-}6}$.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. $46_{2\text{-}3}$.

Philoxenos reports that Bar Ṣūdaylē was a disciple of a certain Johannes the Egyptian, a person whom he has placed into the company of gnostic heresiarchs[4]. It is very difficult to establish anything about this Johannes the Egyptian[5]. Once he was identified with Jōḥannān of Apamea[6], and this opinion has been frequently repeated[7]. In that case, however, this person must be distinguished from his homonym, Jōḥannān the Solitary or Jōḥannān of Apamea.

Bar Ṣūdaylē must have been very eager to disseminate his tenets and views, and this must have produced quite an exciting situation. Philoxenos in the above-mentioned letter says that many monks murmured and reacted negatively. However, it appears from his agitated mood that other circles followed the dispute with sympathy and held an open attitude towards Bar Ṣūdaylē. We must reckon with a certain impact in the realm of Syrian spirituality and mysticism for echoes can be detected also in some later authors[8]. His views enhanced by the literary means employed, were spreading in the Edessene monastic milieu and aided him in spreading his views in wider circles[9]. Though away from Edessa, Bar Ṣūdaylē continued to express his views through his letters and other compositions. Apparently Bar Ṣūdaylē's success in certain circles compelled Philoxenos himself to write a letter to him through one of his disciples, Abraham[10], a copy of which was attached to the letter sent to Abraham and Orestes. Circumstances even required Philoxenos to put his personal letter to him into circulation among the monks in order to counteract his views[11].

c. *Bar Ṣūdaylē's Ideas*

In approaching Bar Ṣūdaylē's system of spirituality and mysticism we must prepare ourselves for an excursion into a very exotic and highly colorful thoughtworld.

[4] In his letter sent to Paṭrīq he gives an enumeration of these chief heretics: Valentinus, Bar Daiṣān, Marcion, Mani and John, called the Egyptian.

[5] It is very doubtful whether he was John, an Origenist who Severos unmasked in Nicomedia, ZACHARIAS, *Vie de Sévère*, éd. KUGENER, p. 106f.

[6] RAHMANI, *Studia syrica* IV, p. XXVI.

[7] GUILLAUMONT, *Les «Kephalaia Gnostica»*, p. 317.

[8] MARSH, *The Book Which is Called the Book of the Holy Hierotheos*. However, see also HAUSHERR, «De doctrina spirituali», p. 176ff.

[9] *Letter of Mār Xenaias*, ed. FROTHINGHAM, p. $14_{6\text{-}8}$.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. $44_{22\text{-}24}$.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. $46_{9\text{-}11}$.

Already in his letter, Jaʿqōb of Serūg touches upon one of Bar Ṣūdaylē's theories which he could not accept[1]. According to Philoxenos, Bar Ṣūdaylē supported a kind of eschatological pantheism asserting that one day all will be in God, identical with Him. This comes out in an incident which Philoxenos reports about Bar Ṣūdaylē's cell: «There came unto me trustworthy men who said that on entering his cell they found written by him on the wall: 'All nature is consubstantial with the divine essence'; and on account of their strong (objection), accusing him of blasphemy, and it becoming known to many monks who murmured at it, he was afraid and removed it from the wall, but secretly put it into his writings»[2].

In the absence of the original writings of Bar Ṣūdaylē, we are left with a regrettable situation, that of learning of his tenets through a letter sent to Abraham and Orestes[3] written by his adversary.

The great conception of universal redemption and return, and of the final absorption into the divine nature, the ἀποκατάστασις — an idea which for Theodoros of Mopsvestia was final but for Origen a part of the process to be continually repeated — constituted the very heart of his system. This thought as observed by Philoxenos was influenced by Evagrios. Regarding this point Philoxenos reports as follows: «For he understands, as he says, by the sixth day, 'motion', having taken the term 'motion' from the monk Evagrios»[4]. The conception of «motion» or «movement»[5] in Evagrios signifies an act by which the intelligent beings

[1] According to this view it would be not just that the sinner for his transgression would be condemned into the hell forever but it is just that the sinner would be punished for the same number of years as he has sinned — according to the same principle also with the retribution given to the righteous ones: so that he who sinned during ten years would remain in fire for only ten years and he who practiced righteousness for ten years would also remain in the kingdom for only ten years and would then leave it», *ibid.*, p. 20.

[2] ܐܬܘ ܠܘܬܝ ܐܢܫܐ ܡܗܝܡܢܐ ܘܐܡܪܘ ܕܟܕ ܥܠܘ ܠܩܠܝܬܗ ܘܐܫܟܚܘ ܕܟܬܝܒ ܠܗ ܥܠ ܐܣܛܐ. ܕܟܠ ܟܝܢܐ ܒܪ ܐܘܣܝܐ ܗܘ ܠܐܠܗܘܬܐ. ܘܡܢ ܕܟܠܘܗܝ ܛܒ ܠܓܘܕܦܐ: ܘܐܫܬܡܥ ܠܣܓܝܐܐ ܕܝܪܝܐ ܕܪܛܢܘ. ܕܚܠ ܘܐܥܛܝܗ ܡܢ ܐܣܛܐ. ܘܣܡܗ ܒܡܛܫܝܐܝܬ ܒܟܬܒܘܗܝ. *ibid.*, p. $42_{20\text{-}24}$.

[3] The text is beset with problematic readings; about emendations which become necessary for the text, see GUILLAUMONT, *Les «Kephalaia Gnostica»*, p. 310 and JANSMA, «Philoxenus' Letter to Abraham and Orestes», p. 79ff.

[4] ܐܣܬܟܠ ܓܝܪ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܫܬܬܐ ܡܬܬܙܝܥܢܘܬܐ ܟܕ ܢܣܒܗ ܠܫܡܐ ܕܡܬܬܙܝܥܢܘܬܐ ܡܢ ܝܚܝܕܝܐ ܐܘܓܪܝܣ, *Letter to Mār Xenaias*, éd. FROTHINGHAM, p. 36.

[5] κίνησις.

have moved away from the Unity who after their fall practice the restrait and asceticism in the world which leads them to progress.

To elaborate the system built upon this conception, Bar Ṣūdaylē adopted concepts from a mystical interpretation of the days of the week. Philoxenos supplies supplementary information to the effect that Bar Ṣūdaylē took the point of departure for his speculations from the logion in Luke XIII,31-33. As over against the Greek original text in verse 33[6], the Pešīṭtā was used; it was particularly suitable for his particular argument because it allowed for the juxtaposition of «today» and «tomorrow», respectively symbolizing the present world on the one hand and the future world on the other hand in the text: «I must work[7] today and tomorrow and on the day following I will go (hence)»[8]. On that basis, Bar Ṣūdaylē constructed the stages of his eschatological vision: «Now if, according to his studies, today, the sixth day, is an allegory of this world, and tomorrow, the Sabbath, a type of rest, and the third day, the first of the week, a symbol of the consummation; what then comes after the consummation?»[9] Let it be noted that this symbolism of three days and eschatology in two phases comes from Evagrios. Even the scriptural texts employed to support this construction are the same as those used by Evagrios[10].

For further clarification of the ideas of Bar Ṣūdaylē, light comes from Philoxenos. According to him, Bar Ṣūdaylē adopted Jewish millenarist views: «Following the Jewish doctrine, he appoints after the resurrection two retributions, one of which he calls rest[11] and the other perfection, one liberty and the other divinity, together with other names which he has contrived and applied to them[12]. In the period of «rest», the just

[6] δεῖ με σήμερον καὶ αὔριον καὶ τῇ ἐχομένῃ πορεύεσθαι.

[7] ܒܪܡ ܘܠܐ ܠܝ ܕܝܘܡܢܐ ܘܡܚܪ ܐܣܥܘܪ ܘܠܝܘܡܐ ܐܚܪܢܐ ܐܙܠ, This is the reading in the Pešīṭtā against the Greek original.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 36.

[9] ܘܐܢ ܐܝܟ ܡܪܢܝܬܐ ܗܘ ܝܘܡܢܐ ܥܪܘܒܬܐ ܦܠܐܬܐ ܗܝ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܗܢܐ : ܘܡܚܪ ܫܒܬܐ ܛܘܦܣܐ ܕܢܝܚܬܐ. ܘܚܕܒܫܒܐ ܗܘܐ ܕܬܠܬܐ ܐܪܙܐ ܫܘܡܠܝܐ. ܡܢܐ ܗܝܕܝܢ ܡܢ ܒܬܪ ܫܘܡܠܝܐ, *ibid.*, p. 36_{19-21}.

[10] Namely Luke XIII,32 and I Cor. XV,28.

[11] Cf. Hebrews III-IV.

[12] ܟܕ ܗܝ ܐܝܟ ܒܬܪ ܡܫܠܡܢܘܬܐ ܝܗܘܕܝܬܐ. ܣܐܡ ܐܦ ܡܢ ܒܬܪ ܩܝܡܬܐ ܬܪܝܢ ܦܘܪ̈ܥܢܐ. ܘܠܚܕ ܩܪܐ ܢܝܚܬܐ ܘܠܐܚܪܢܐ ܫܘܡܠܝܐ, *Letter of Mār Xenaias*, ed. FROTHINGHAM, p. 34_{12-15}.

persons enjoy their promised recompense and the sinners receive their punishment. After this comes the consummation when all will be in all, the eternity when God shall be in all. In another place, Philoxenos adds: «For he calls today and tomorrow (respectively) the evil world and liberty, and the being perfected on the third day is, that God will be all in all»[13]. This is the consummation of all created beings with the Creator[14].

d. *The Book of Hierotheos*

Another work has been awaiting introduction, one which is far more profitable for this study than all speculation. It is a source which opens up new avenues for ideas directly related to spirituality and mysticism. This is the Book of Hierotheos, known only via a unique manuscript[1]. That new sources have come to light[2] is very welcome.

The work does not bear the name of Bar Ṣūdaylē but it has been attributed to him. This witness comes from Iwannīs of Dārā[3], Qūriaqōs of Antioch[4], and Bar ʿEbrāyā[5]. This tradition has been followed also by modern scholars: Bar Ṣūdaylē was the author of the Book of Hierotheos[6]. The complete title of this work is: «Of Saint Hierotheos, on the hidden mysteries of the house of God»[7].

[13] ܝܘܡܢܐ ܠܗ ܐܡܪ ܘܡܚܪ ܕܐܬܝܗܘܝ, ܠܥܠܡܐ ܒܝܫܐ ܘܠܚܐܪܘܬܐ. ܗܘ ܕܡܫܬܡܠܝܐ ܠܝܘܡܐ ܕܬܠܬܐ. ܗܘ ܕܢܗܘܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܟܠ ܒܟܠ, *ibid.*, p. 40_{17-19}.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 32.

[1] Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 7,189, ROSEN-FORSHALL, *Catalogus*, p. 74. The work is extant in connection with an extensive commentary composed by Theodosios, patriarch of Antioch (887-896).

[2] Ms. Mardin Orth. 412, written in 1349/50 A.D.; Ms. Mardin Orth. 413, written in 1784/5 A.D.; Ms. Mardin Orth. 415 and 420 are younger, VÖÖBUS, *Syriac Manuscripts*. Ms. Damascus Patr. 4/6 is a recent copy but Ms. 4/16 is a recent copy of a codex which was written in 1661 A. Gr., i.e. 1349/50 A.D. Ms. Mosul Orth. 139 comes from the 19th cent. See VÖÖBUS, «*Discovery of New Manuscript Sources for the Book of Hierotheos*», p. 185ff.

[3] In his work titled «On Resurrection»; a very precious manuscript has been preserved in Ms. Mardin Orth. 356. Other new sources are: Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 281; Ms. Atšaneh 111, and Ms. Mosul Orth. in quart size, coming from the 16th or 17th cent., but has no signature. See VÖÖBUS, «Important Manuscript Discoveries on Iwannīs of Dārā», p. 576ff.

[4] BAR ʿEBRĀYĀ, *Nomocanon*, ed. BEDJAN, p. 105.

[5] BAR ʿEBRĀYĀ, *Candélabre du sanctuaire*, ed. NAU, p. 263.

[6] FROTHINGHAM, *Stephen bar Sudhaili*, p. 63ff.; MARSH, *The Book which is Called the Holy Hierotheos*, 222ff.; HAUSHERR, «De doctrina spirituali», p. 184ff.; GUILLAUMONT, *Les «Kephalaia Gnostica»*, p. 311f.

[7] ܕܩܕܝܫܐ ܐܝܪܬܐܘܣ ܥܠ ܐܪ̈ܙܐ ܟܣܝܐ ܕܒܝܬ ܐܠܗܐ. II, 9-10; III, 2 and IV, 15-17, ed. MARSH.

The strong mystical tone is evident already in the title itself. Even the name of the person referred to is mystical, since it is the name of the figure which appears in the writings of Pseudo-Dionysios as the master of Dionysios[8]. Ascribing the book to Hierotheos is pure fiction. There are reasons for thinking that this was not done by Bar Ṣūdaylē himself but that it belongs to the transmission of his work which had its own particular history. The intrinsic evidence of the work in the present form shows that it is not of one cast. Sutures in the body of the work are conspicuous[9]. An attractive solution rests on the assumption that a disciple of Bar Ṣūdaylē referred the title to Hierotheos, giving it such a protector[10] in order to save the work of his master.

The Book of Hierotheos represents a speculative theological epic conjuring up mystical scenes along the way through the celestial spheres. The parts of the work have been so structured that between the first book on cosmology and the fifth on eschatology, there are the books which are devoted to the ascension of the intellect towards perfection. This is the very heart of this mystical work displaying a series of mysteries.

In the movement back towards the Creator, the ascetics must purify their souls and bodies so that they will be in no danger of falling back. In this spiritual ascent, the body is as if dead and the soul is absorbed into the mind. The intellect is repeatedly assailed by the demonic forces whose abode is in the regions between the heaven and the earth. After having reached the region beyond the firmament, the intellect is guided onward by the angels[11]. The mind at this stage is like that of a newborn child having passed from darkness into light. New mysteries developed from sacramental imagery are envisaged.

Although Bar Ṣūdaylē speaks of baptism as a necessity for salvation, in reality Bar Ṣūdaylē thinks that this is no more than a symbol of something far more essential: beyond the baptism of water there is a second baptism. There is the baptism which the intellect receives beyond the heavens: a baptism with spirit and fire and only this is able to realize union with the ultimate Being.

In the same way does a mystical eucharist find its place here. The mind is nourished by the mystical bread[12] which instigates the desire to

[8] MIGNE, col. 648f., 681ff., and 713.
[9] The preface and the titles have been added later, MARSH, p. 234, 245.
[10] GUILLAUMONT, *Les «Kephalaia Gnostica»*, p. 329.
[11] III,4-5, ed. MARSH, p. 68f.
[12] ܐܘܟܪܣܛܝܐ ܪܐܙܢܝܬܐ.

progress towards the ultimate Being, instilling also forces of perfection and dispensing secrets.

On this road of ascent, Bar Ṣūdaylē envisages also another mystical phenomenon, the place of the cross[13] signifying the endurance of passion and the suffering of the crucifixion in imitation of Christ himself. Without these sufferings the mind cannot be perfected. Thus the intellect undergoes mystical crucifixion which has the aim of purification. This has to do with the mystical death of the intellect[14]. After three days in the tomb, the mystical resurrection takes place[15]. Now purified, the intellect is ready for complete unification. Again, it should be noted that the idea of identifying the intellect of Christ with «the grand intellect»[16] rests completely on Evagrian christology.

As analysis shows, Bar Ṣūdaylē has created a conglomeration of speculations for his system of spirituality and mysticism. The component parts come from different sources. Speculations from the writings of Pseudo-Dionysios[17] which works were available[18] in Syriac[19] have been amply employed. The doctrines of Origen in an extreme form have been adopted. The mysticism of Evagrios and his eschatology with its pantheistic orientation[20] has exercised a very deep impact upon Bar Ṣūdaylē[21]. The presentation of the ascent of the intellect obviously has borrowed elements from other esoteric sources since the gnostic themes concerning «the journey of the soul» through the celestial spheres has

[13] ܨܠܝܒܐ.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 65f.
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 65f.
[16] III,3, *ibid.*, p. 64ff.
[17] This is contrary to the views expressed by Frothingham who was convinced that the Book of Hierotheos was the very source for the doctrines in the writings of Ps - Dionysios which, of cource, would have been enormously important historically since «the whole of scholastic theology and of medieval mysticism is founded on the doctrine», p. 6. Without critique this view was taken over by MERX, *Idee und Grundlinien einer allgemeinen Geschichte der Mystik*.
[18] Be it noted in this connection that the first Syriac translation of the writings Ps - Dionysios was made before the year 536. Sargīs of Rešainā makes a very interesting comment full of suggestiveness, that in this translation he received assistance from a certain Stephanos. SHERWOOD, «Traité de Serge de Rešayna», p. 152.
[19] The known sources have been enriched by unknown documents. Consistent searching has been able to ferret out new and precious records. Ms. Mosul St. Mary I is a very ancient parchment codex; Ms. Damascus Patr. 12/23 comes from the 7th or 8th cent.; Ms. Mosul Orth., written in the 19th cent., has no signature; Ms. Mardin Orth. 1003 is a copy by a more recent hand.
[20] GUILLAUMONT, *Les «Kephalaia Gnostica»*, p. 318ff.
[21] This impact appears particularly strong in his cosmology.

inspired vivid imaginations. There are many-colored speculations on various themes such as the «tree of life»[22]. This conglomeration also has absorbed oriental elements coming from Manichaeism[23].

4. A Treatise on Three Stages

a. *The Source*

The source to be introduced bears a long title: «A letter that Philoxenos of Mabbūg wrote to one of his disciples on withdrawal, on service in the coenobium, on stillness and on the stay in the cell»[1]. That is the way the title appears in Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,728[2]. The subscription[3], however, reads: «A *mēmrā* of Mār 'Aksenaya, i.e. Philoxenos on the three stages»[4].

The same source is to be found in Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,729[5] but since this text is without its beginning, the title remains unknown.

There is another version of the title which is even longer: «A letter of the holy Mār Philoxenos which he sent to a certain beloved one who was one of the heads in the desert, on the origin of the withdrawal of a man from the world, and on submission in the coenobium, on the stay in the cell and on the stillness that is in solitude (on) the struggles and revelations and distress and joy, which happen to those who live in stillness; It is divided into three chapters because of the three stages»[6]. This is the way the treatise is introduced in Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 17,262[7].

The text of this treatise has been edited by Olinder[8].

[22] ܐܝܠܢܐ ܫܪܝܪܐ «the true tree of life» IV,2-3, *The Book of Hierotheos*, ed. MARSH, p. 80ff.

[23] In connection with the dissent of the intellect, the battle involves the Archon, the tree and the roots of the evil, IV,12, p. 98.

[1] ܬܘܒ ܐܓܪܬܐ ܕܦܝܠܘܟܣܢܘܣ ܕܟܬܒ ܠܚܕ ܡܢ ܬܠܡܝܕܘܗܝ، ܗܘ، ܥܠ ܡܦܩܬܐ ܕܡܢ ܥܠܡܐ. ܘܥܠ ܬܫܡܫܬܐ ܕܒܥܘܡܪܐ. ܘܥܠ ܫܠܝܐ. ܘܥܠ ܡܘܬܒܐ ܕܒܩܠܝܬܐ.

[2] Fol. 76a-125a, of the 12th or the 13th cent., WRIGHT, *Catalogue* II, p. 876.

[3] ܡܐܡܪܐ ܕܐܟܣܢܝܐ ܕܦܝܠܘܟܣܢܘܣ ܕܬܠܬ ܡܕܪ̈ܓܬܐ.

[4] A French translation was provided by GRAFFIN, «Lettre à un supérieur», p. 330ff., 455ff., and 77ff.

[5] Fol. 131a-157, also of the 12th or 13th cent., WRIGHT, *Catalogue* II, p. 874.

[6] ܕܡܬܦܠܓܐ ܠܬܠܬܐ ܪ̈ܫܝܢ : ܥܠ ܬܠܬܝܗܘܢ ܡܕܪ̈ܓܬܐ, WRIGHT, *Catalogue* II, p. 868.

[7] Fol. 42a-71b, of the 12th cent., WRIGHT, *Catalogue* II, p. 868.

[8] *A letter of Philoxenos of Mabbug sent to a friend*, ed. OLINDER, p. 1ff.

With regard to the transmission of the text it must be added that Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 17,262 represents a recension which displays reductions. Examination of the variant readings yields the result that the shorter form of the text must represent a secondary form of the treatise. This abbreviated text is the one which has been translated also into Armenian[9]. Also the Arabic version represents the same recension[10].

There are other manuscripts but they are of younger origin[11]. We are very fortunate that this company of manuscripts has been supplemented by unknown witnesses ferreted out from their hiding places in the Syrian Orient[12].

According to its physiognomy this document reflects a very different stream in the tradition. Not only does it present ascetic philosophy in its own way but it also allows us to see something which all other sources in this genre do not show.

b. *Literary-Critical Problems*

Despite the claim of the treatise that it comes from the pen of Philoxenos, even the first acquaintance with this document makes it clear that such a claim cannot be taken seriously. It simply does not ring true as a text coming from the pen of Philoxenos. The tenor of it is quite different. We have enough authentic material from Philoxenos to form a judgement on the basis of substance, character of presentation and style. Suspicion that its claim is dubious[1] and that it is not an authentic writing from Philoxenos[2] have, not surprisingly, arisen.

The facts which speak against Philoxenos' authorship are very weighty. The theological tenor of this work is completely different from that which is known of him. Monophysite theological views play no role at all. Faith, vital in his authentic writings, and the economy of the

[9] *Vark'ew vkayabanowt'iwnk'* II, p. 538ff.

[10] GRAF, *Geschichte der christlich arabischen Literatur* I, p. 453.

[11] See DE HALLEUX, *Philoxène de Mabbog*, p. 269f.

[12] Ms. Anḥel Mār Qyriaqōs, a very heavy volume in folio size, bound in brown leather, has no signature; this text appears on quire 23, fol. 9a-quire 25, fol. 7a; Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 181, fol. 1b-13b; Ms. 268, fol. 1ff.; the manuscript has been written in the Chaldean script; Ms. Mosul Orth. 209, fol. 1aff.; Ms. Orth. 418, fol. 252a-257a; Ms. 422; Ms. 848, see VÖÖBUS, *Syriac Manuscripts*; Ms. Aleppo Orth. 102.

[1] DE HALLEUX, *Philoxène de Mabbog*, p. 272ff.

[2] HARB, «*Die Unechtheit des Philoxenos-Briefes über die 3 Stufen*», p. 380ff. Harb has put up a new theory that this writing comes from Jauseph Ḥazzāyā.

incarnation, essential for his ascetic philosophy[3], are completely absent. Thus the very foundation which characterizes Philoxenos' spirituality is completely lacking here. The impression left with us is this, that this document must come from a time not so acutely troubled as the time in which Philoxenos lived, fought and suffered.

Other considerations add their part to this negative conclusion. The spiritual milieu of this document exhibits a different orientation. There is too much of a predilection for visions, revelations and miraculous phenomena for it to come from the pen of Philoxenos. In these matters his own stand displays a stark sobriety.

Additional observations can be made on the basis of the intrinsic evidence. They concern the imagery and thoughtworld which are different from that of Philoxenos. In the authentic writings of Philoxenos, the Exodus episode is typologically understood in such a way that the exodus from Egypt, the crossing through the Red Sea and the wanderings in the desert respectively mean slavery in the world, troubles, passions, and labors, and freedom after withdrawal from the world[4]. The same episode in this sources uses an altogether different typology. Here the Exodus from Egypt represents a bodily stage, namely, the coenobitic life. Then the imagery jumps to the episode of the crossing of the Jordan. This represents the psychic stage, that is, the solitary life. Then our source jumps to the episode of the entry into Jerusalem which represents the spiritual stage. Not only is this imagery different, it is also a not well thought-out illustration of an organic process, especially since that which is illustrated has to do with entirely different events. One cannot expect anything like this from a mind as keen as that of Philoxenos.

A feature in the intrinsic evidence must also be brought out. The longer recension of this treatise includes the comment that the author had written a commentary[5] on the Centuries[6] of Evagrios[7] but there is no evidence that Philoxenos wrote such a commentary on Evagrios. His

[3] *Discourses*, ed. BUDGE, p. 7-9; *Commentaire du Prologue johannique* I,1-17, éd. DE HALLEUX.

[4] *Discourses*, ed. BUDGE, p. 276f.; 284f.

[5] GUILLAUMONT, *Les «Kephalaia Gnostica»*, p. 211ff.

[6] See page 149f.

[7] The Syriac term ܦܘܫܩܐ is ambiguous since *pūšāqā* can mean translation as well as interpretation. However, the author helps us out by an additional comment clarifying the situation namely that the purpose of this work was to elucidate Evagrios. Thus what is meant here is a commentary.

biography[8] in various forms[9] including unknown sources which come from the Syrian Orient which provide information about his literary creativity[10] show no knowledge of any such commentary.

On the basis of these observations it must be concluded that this source stems from some unknown author and was ascribed in some way or other later on to the authentic writings of Philoxenos.

c. *The Thoughtworld of the Document*

This document which flows from tradition other than that of Philoxenos undertakes to deal with the phenomenon of monastic life according to the forms developed for it in the progression towards higher goals. This marching towards perfection is described by an abstract term *mešuḥtā*[1]. Since the subject matter is ascetic life progressing on the road towards perfection, the term «degree» would not be the best way to translate the Syrian word. «Stage» would be much more fitting to describe such an organically progressive movement in the realm of spirituality. Thus this source speaks of the monastic life in the corporeal stage, the psychic stage and the pneumatic stage. Thus the treatise therefore has been divided into three chapters according to these three stages.

The stages are presented in such a way that in the first stage the struggle is against the external difficulties and hardships, in the second stage against thoughts and temptations by demons in order to attain purification of the thought[2] and in the third stage, external and internal faults having been overcome, the arduous road culminating in the arrival at integrity[3] which allows the reception of divine gifts and the enjoyment of revelations of God's mysteries. Thus the road towards the ultimate goal in spiritual life is marked by purification, illumination and per-

[8] See page 123.

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] Cf. VÖÖBUS,«*La biographie de Philoxène*», p. 111ff.

[1] ܡܫܘܚܬܐ.

[2] *A Letter of Philoxenos*, ed. OLINDER, p. 6ff.

[3] Among complex notions is the term ܕܟܝܘܬܐ, «purity», which signifies the first purification of the passions. The author distinguishes this notion from ܫܦܝܘܬܐ, designating the supreme purification. The term means «serenity», «transparency» and «sincerity». HAUSHERR, translates the term by «integrity», «Jean le Solitaire, Dialogue sur l'âme», p. 22. Mingana prefers «Serenity» and Rücker «Lauterkeit».

fection. Be it noted in this connection that this scheme is the same as the one which underlies the writings of Pseudo-Dionysios. However, it must be added here that these stages are not understood as completely isolated phenomena, for just as Jōḥannān the Solitary speaks of interrelation and cooperation between body, soul and spirit, so does this document. Creative elements at the higher stages are in a certain way already operative in the lower ones[4]. Such elements, like spores, are understood to be necessary prerequisites for the transition into the higher stages. Further, the imagery of the author is marked by its closeness to the ideas of Evagrios, a figure for whom the author shows great admiration.

The treatise presents a perfect «directorium spirituale». To this end, the author uses the experiences and ascetic wisdom of monastic heroes — but it is very remarkable that all of those who mentioned by name are Egyptian authorities[5].

The description of the monastic community which belongs to the first stage also unfolds something new. Here the author introduces the institution of spiritual guides in the monasteries — a function about which nothing has been said in other sources. These spiritual guides are introduced as those «who are credited with their service and mental guidance»[6]. They keep their eye on the spiritual development and growth of the beginners. Their importance in the training of the novices is strongly emphasized. Besides advising and counseling them in matters of spiritual growth and advancement, they also have the power to impose the observance of more fasts, abstinence and vigils. All this comes out in the injunctions given them: «But you, o my leading brothers, make them a rule[7] for their life with regard to course and measure, that they may not do work of supererogation and so that the fervor of their love weakens»[8]. Their service was held to be critical in molding the ascetic movement[9], and beginners are urged to follow their instructions obe-

[4] Evidently first the impulses for the withdrawal from the world «have been sown in us in the nature of our first creation».

[5] Quoted are the following persons: Ammonios, John the Little, Anthony, Arsenios, Evagrios and also the book of Paradise has been quoted.

[6] ܐܠܐ ܐܢܬܘܢ ܐܘ ܡ̈ܕܒܪܢܐ ܕܒܝܬ ܗܢܐ ܦܘܠܚܢܐ ܘܡܕܒܪܢܘܬܐ ܪܘܚܢܝܬܐ ܐܬܗܝܡܢܬܘܢ, *A Letter of Philoxenos*, p. $7_{14\text{-}17}$.

[7] ܩ̈ܢܘܢܐ, «canons», GRAFFIN, «Lettre à un supérieur», p. 347.

[8] *A Letter of Philoxenos*, p. 12.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 46.

diently: «But you o, our brother, when you sit in the cell, put every thought that you have either from the right side or from the left, before your leader, and whatever he tells you, do it diligently, without turning aside from it»[10].

Given such an arrangement, the transition from life in the monastery to life in a cell is depends upon the judgement of the spiritual guides: «When the pious monk has accomplished the laborious work in the monastery in humility and obedience and in steadfastness against all the abuse that has been directed by others against him, and accomplished the inner order duly, he gets permission from his spiritual fathers to go out to a cell»[11]. The importance of this transition in monastic life is brought into focus when attention is drawn to their typology in this connection; it is drawn from the biblical account of the promised land and Joshua's connection with it.

This transition opens up the next stage on the road in the ascetic pursuit. The monk is now subjected to the «rules of the cell»[12]. These new injunctions require strict seclusion and specify ascetic[13] and devotional obligations[14]. Additional injunctions deal with ways of reaching a more rigorous discipline in fasting, with the vigils of the night, and with uninterrupted scriptural reading. A large portion of the source is devoted to the internal development and growth of the solitary. Psychological phenomena in particular are given special attention. These involve an anatomy of internal struggles and temptations. In this connection emphasis is placed on the demonological, which is then allegorically developed. It would appear that such imagery was needed in order to

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

[11] ܡܐ ܕܫܡܠܝ ܚܣܝܐ ܦܘܠܚܢܐ ܥܡܠܢܐ ܕܥܘܡܪܐ ܒܡܟܝܟܘܬܐ. ܘܒܡܫܬܡܥܢܘܬܐ. ܘܒܡܣܝܒܪܢܘܬܐ ܕܥܠ ܟܠ ܨܥܪܐ ܕܡܢ ܐ̈ܚܪܢܐ ܡܬܬܥܒܕܝܢ ܠܘܬܗ. ܘܫܡܠܝ ܛܟܣܐ ܕܓܘܐ, *ibid.*, p. 15f.

[12] ܩ̈ܢܘܢܐ ܕܩܠܝܬܐ, *ibid.*, p. 38.

[13] «For it is incumbent on him who has recently gone out to the cell, to observe the following: perpetual silence, so that there will be no communication for him with anybody, isolation from family and relations, and not appearing outside the door of his cell in the day-time, except on account of the wants of nature,or illness about which no law is established». *ibid.*, p. 17.

[14] ܒܫܠܝܐ ܓܝܪ ܡܫܡܫܢܘܬܐ ܕܠܒܐ ܒܩܠܝܬܐ ܐܝܟ ܦܘܠܚܢܐ. ܒܗ ܠܠܝܐ ܠܡܫܡܫܢܘܬܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ. ܢܫܠܡܝܗ̇. ܒܪ ܠܗ ܡܢ ܗܢܘܢ ܘܠܐ ܡܥܒܪ ܡܕܡ. ܡܢ ܩܠܝܬܗ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܢܝܩܐ ܢܦܩ. ܘܐܝܟ ܡܢܗ ܕܐܢܝܩܐ ܢܦܩ, *ibid.*, p. $20_{2\text{-}8}$.

deal with the meaning of the inner struggles and vexations. A good deal of space is devoted to descriptions of the assaults of the demons. Such very elaborate accounts must have found serious reception in the circles of the solitaries inasmuch as the functions of the demons were specified even to detail the effect of which was a diatribe on advanced demonology[15].

In order to meet the continuous attacks of these eveil forces, this source turns to a discussion of the armour available to solitaries against all of these assaults of the demonic forces. This armory consists of spiritual exercises, namely, of a rythmical flow in prayer practices, of meditation, of reading of the scriptures and of vigils[16], all supported and strengthened by ascetic practices. All of these are activities which fill out the life of a solitary. For endurance in this life, other sources of strength are available. Here the role of the «guardian angel» must be mentioned in the first place, a power sustaining, supporting and strenghtening the solitary during his temptations, struggles and vexations. When the visitation of grace takes place it has an inspiring effect which enlivens the soul. Such a visitation rekindles the spirit so that the performance of all the ascetic and devotional duties takes on an entirely new character. These effects are described in the following way: «His heart burns, as with fire, with the love of the quiet of the cell, and of continual kneeling, and with love of the recital of the psalms without interruption and continual reading»[17].

The spirituality of this source stands out for its esoteric character. The author has a strong predilection for mystical phenomena. Visions, revelations and participation in the divine mysteries constitute an integral part of life in the stage of perfection. In this respect the source allows us some very instructive insights: «And now and then something entices your mind and lifts it up to the region of unutterable light, and

[15] Demonic forces are classified in the following way: the demon of depression, of laziness, the demon of migration which entices the solitary to wander from cell to cell and from monastery to monastery and from mountain to mountain, the demon of gluttony, of fornication, of vain glory and of fear.

[16] «The hermit who watches from evening to dawn in vigilance of the mind is like the angels of the light, who continually celebrate the threefold holy secret of the world to come», *ibid.*, p. 20. Cf. GELINEAU, «Données liturgiques contenues dans les sept madroshe De la nuit», p. 107ff.

[17] ܗܘ ܕܝܢ ܝܩܕ ܠܒܗ ܐܝܟ ܕܒܢܘܪܐ ܒܪܚܡܬܐ. ܕܫܠܝܐ ܕܩܠܝܬܐ ܘܐܬܟܪܥܘܬܐ ܕܐܡܝܢ ܒܪܚܡܬܐ. ܘܒܪܚܡܬܐ ܕܗܪܓܐ ܕܡܙܡܘܪܐ ܕܠܐ ܦܘܫܟܐ. ܘܩܪܝܢܐ ܐܡܝܢܐ, *A Letter*, ed. OLINDER, p. 48_{1-7}.

you perceive nothing in it but spiritual substances; and the whole of this creation is hidden from your eyes, and you do not know whether you are in the body or outside of the body, because the bodily sense is abolished in you, and in this arena, you only hear the sound of spiritual whispers»[18].

d. *Insights into the Dayly Routine*

Finally another important aspect in the physiognomy of this source has been awaiting introduction. This has to do with the extraordinary contribution this document can make. This source is particularly precious because it has preserved someting which no other source in this genre has exhibited. Here, very rare opportunity is presented us, one allowing us to gain a closer insight into the daily activities of the solitary in his cell. That which is unfolded here in this respect is, indeed, nothing less than a timetable. Since this record is unique, the most important sections deserve to be introduced in extenso.

«When day is breaking, he washes his hands and makes genuflexions before the cross, until his thoughts have been gathered from their wanderings»[1]. These preliminary acts are followed by a prayer fixed in form. This is what the text says: «And when you have gathered your thoughts by means of words of prayer such as these, salute the cross and take the gospel in your hands and put it upon your eyes and your heart and go and stand on your feet before the cross, without sitting on the ground and lay on a cushion every book, in which you read, and fall down before it up to ten times, lifting up your thanks unto him»[2]. After the solitary has read the gospel, he then is advised to repeat the process in the Pauline letters and in the book of Acts until the third hour comes.

«And when the third hour comes, go and stand before the cross and gather your thoughts from the contents of what you have read, and kneel down and implore our Lord amid tears and pain, to give you the key of

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 58.

[1] ܡܐ ܕܢܗܪ ܨܦܪܐ ܢܫܝܓ ܐܝܕܘܗܝ، ܘܢܣܒ ܡܛܠܢܝܬܐ ܕܩܕܡ ܨܠܝܒܐ ܒܕܡܐ ܕܡܬܟܢܫܝܢ ܗܘܢܘܗܝ ܡܢ ܦܗܝܐ, *ibid.*, p. 20_{13-17}.

[2] ܘܡܐ ܕܟܢܫܬ ܚܘܫܒܝܟ ܐܘ ܐܝܟ ܦܠܘܚܐ ܒܡ̈ܠܐ ܕܬܫܡܫܬܐ ܕܐܝܟ ܗܠܝܢ : ܫܠܡ ܠܨܠܝܒܐ. ܘܣܒ ܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ ܒܐܝ̈ܕܝܟ. ܘܣܝܡܝܗܝ، ܥܠ ܥܝ̈ܢܝܟ ܘܥܠ ܠܒܟ. ܘܩܘܡ ܩܕܡ ܨܠܝܒܐ ܥܠ ܪ̈ܓܠܝܟ. ܟܕ ܠܐ ܝܬܒ ܐܢܬ ܥܠ ܐܪܥܐ. ܘܥܠ ܒܣܕܝܐ ܣܝܡ ܐܢܬ ܟܠ ܟܬܒܐ ܕܩܪܐ ܐܢܬ ܒܗ. ܘܢܦܠ ܐܢܬ ܩܕܡܘܗܝ، ܥܠ ܥܣܪܐ. ܘܐܬܟܪܥ ܩܕܡܘܗܝ، ܥܕܡܐ ܠܥܣܪ ܙܒܢܝܢ ܟܕ ܡܫܒܚ ܐܢܬ ܠܗ ܘܡܘܕܐ, *ibid.*, p. 21_{5-18}.

the meaning of the psalms of the blessed David»[3]. After the office of the third hour, the solitary is to take a book of the fathers and read it until the office of mid-day, including contemplation on that which had been read[4].

After the midday office the description of the timetable follows: «But from the time of midday to the ninth hour, if you have a work to do with your hands, do it without breaking the rule of genuflexion[5] for manual work that you covet, but fulfill the rule of genuflexion together with this work»[6]. In this connection it is added that, although there are authors of different opinion on this, the spiritual fathers have made work with the hands an obligatory rule. Its benefits are obvious: first, the work lightens the burden of weariness[7] and «second, the solitary is not forced perpetually to leave his cell, and thus to become familiar with the peasants and to be deprived of quiet sitting in his cell»[8]. And still more work enables the solitary to give alms to others.

«From the ninth hour till evening he should attend to his nourishment, as our spiritual fathers have said, with the memory of God in his heart and the rule of genuflexion that we have spoken of above»[9].

[3] [Syriac text], *ibid.*, p. 22.

[4] «And when you have begun with the first psalm, then do not devote yourself to a great many psalms but to the investigation into the meaning that is concealed in them, as it is not amiss that the intellect of a man is occupied with one word of a psalm for seven nights and days, just as it has been said by our holy fathers, that one word near at hand is better than a thousand in the distance», *ibid.*, p. 22.

[5] μετάνοια.

[6] [Syriac text], *ibid.*, p. $23_{1\text{-}8}$.

[7] Here an episode from the life of Antonios is brought as an illustration.

[8] [Syriac text], *ibid.*, p. $24_{12\text{-}26}$.

[9] [Syriac text], *ibid.*, p. $25_{17\text{-}27}$.

The night belongs to vigils[10]. Specific instructions on the way to arrange the night time are given, as follows: «But spend the whole night in vigilance, watching body and soul, dividing it into three parts: one for psalms and kneeling, the second for reading, and the third for musing upon the doctrine and for the sweet sounds of anthems and hymns»[11].

[10] «The solitary who watches from evening to dawn in vigilance of the mind is like the angels of the light, who continually celebrate the threefold holy secret of the world to come», *ibid.*, p. 26.

[11] [Syriac text], *ibid.*, p. $26_{8\text{-}16}$.

V. MONASTICISM IN THE LIGHT OF THE LEGISLATIVE SOURCES

1. The Rules of Philoxenos

a. *The Sources*

There is another reason to return to Philoxenos whose other contributions are well-known. The reason in this instance is his contribution to the genre of rules[1].

With regard to formal appearance and structure, this cycle of regulations leaves us with the impression that they are rules; each of them begins with the same stereotyped formula: «A monk who ...» Indeed, in some manuscripts, they have been numbered in the same way as in the case of canons[2].

For the most part, these regulations deal with principles of the monastic life. The admonitions are often cast in the form of biblical injunctions; however, concrete issues are in mind. These rules in particular gain in significance in view of the stimulus Philoxenos gave to monasticism, engaging it deeply in the doctrinal battles in which the life of his church, and its very survival, was at stake[3].

As some manuscripts state, this cycle rests on a letter of Philoxenos sent to the monks at Amid[4]. The text is not more specific. This remark could be explained by saying that these rules were compiled by others in a monastery. It is readily understandable that, in the monasteries, canons were extracted from the letters of Philoxenos. Yet it is equally possible that Philoxenos himself may have done this, or provided the initial stimuli for having it done. Everything that is known of his endeavors in connection with the monastic movement[5], in the interest of strength-

[1] Vööbus, *Syriche Kanonessammlungen* I, 1b, p. 316ff.

[2] Ms. Paris Syr. 62; Ms. Cambr. Add. 2023 and Ms. Šarfeh Patr. Syr. 302.

[3] Vööbus, «Die Rolle der Regeln im syrischen Mönchtum», p. 338f.

[4] Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 17,193, fol. 69b; Ms. Vatican Syr. 126, fol. 392a and Ms. Cambridge Add. 2023, fol. 237b.

[5] About a wide correspondence of Philoxenos with the monastic communities and individual monks see Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, p. 142. He did not only keep in contact with the monasteries in his own diocese but also with those beyond the boundaries of his bishopric. Among the new sources which contain his letters, the most

ening discipline and particularly of instilling the spirit of commitment to the Monophysite cause then in danger, makes it all the more comprehensible that his endeavors in this respect might also have included the issuance of such rules of life, which would be a quintessence of his instructions, to the monastic communities[6]. Our sources do not assist us in deciding this question. However, a more probable thesis would hold that someone else compiled these rules since — given what we know about Philoxenos — we would expect more of these regulations if they had come directly from his pen.

There is quite a row of codices which have preserved this cycle of rules[7], so that the transmission of the text is more than satisfactory[8], constituting the basis for a critical edition of the text[9].

The oldest text appears in two manuscripts, Ms. Paris Syr. 62[10] of the ninth century[11] and in Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 17,193[12] of the year 874 A.D.[13] Two other manuscripts are of equal age[14]. Other witnesses are much younger[15].

The number of witnesses has been increasing as manuscripts in the Syrian Orient[16] have been unearthed. Among these sources a different recension which displays changes, corrections, transpositions and even some supplements takes from another cycle of canons[17], has emerged.

important, containing collections of them, are the following: Ms. Mardin Orth. 848, Ms. Mosul Orth. 209, and Ms. Anḥel Mār Qyriaqōs, a manuscript in quart size, which has no signature.

[6] By the way, there are rules for the priests, too, which rest on his homily on faith. Ms. Mus. Borg. Syr. 10, fol. 104b-106a.

[7] The earliest sources are: Ms. Paris Syr. 62, fol. 218b of the 9th cent., Zotenberg, *Catalogue*, p. 22ff. and Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 17, 193, fol. 69b-70a, written in the year 874 A.D., Wright, *Catalogue* I, p. 497. About other manuscripts see Vööbus, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen* I, 1B, p. 316.

[8] *Ibid.*,

[9] *Syriac and Arabic Documents*, ed. Vööbus, p. 53f.

[10] Fol. 218b.

[11] Zotenberg, *Catalogue*, p. 29.

[12] Fol. 69b-70a.

[13] Wright, *Catalogue* II, p. 989.

[14] Ms. Vatican Syr. 126, fol. 392a-392b of the year 1223 A.D., Assemani, *Catalogus* II, p. 177, and Ms. Cambridge Add. 2023, fol. 237b-238a of the 13th cent., Wright-Cook, *Catalogue* II, p. 600.

[15] Ms. Borgia Syr. 148, fol. 183a-183b was written in the year 1576 A.D., and Ms. Harvard Har. 36, fol. 3b-4a, written in the year 1796-7 A.D., Goshen-Gottstein, *Syriac Manuscripts*, p. 57.

[16] Mardin Orth. 157, fol. 103b-104a, of the 16th cent., Vööbus, *Syriac Manuscripts*. Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 302, fol. 39b is of the year 1699 A.D., Ms. Mosul Orth. 209, fol. 42b, written in the year 1911: Ms. Mosul Orth. 187, fol. 67b-68a, copied in the year 1921 A.D.

[17] Ms. Mardin Orth. 322, fol. 2b; the manuscript is of the year 1473/4, Vööbus, *Syriac Manuscripts*, but this folio page has been added later to the codex written by a recent hand.

b. *The Rules*

2. From the letter on «Zeal» that was written by him to the monasteries, and he says thus:

1. A monk, indeed, who because of the present relaxes from zeal, is a partaker of Judas the traitor. That one sold the Messiah for money and this one is selling him for handfuls of barley and loaves of bread; that one sold him for one time, but this one sells him every day.
2. A monk who is favorable to a man[1] does not know God.
3. A monk who is too modest (to accept) authority and ceases from zeal is not conscious of the Messiah.
4. A monk who becomes like everybody else in manner, by showing favor, puts on the likeness of a demon.
5. A monk who puts on sack cloth but becomes silent about the truth, has the leprosy of Gehazi[2] for his garment.
6. A monk who is being visited by grace but becomes silent about the faith, on the last day his mouth shall be shut like that of the legion[3].
7. A monk who is a companion to the new Jews[4], crucifies God together with the old Jews.
8. A monk who at the time when war is necessary, on the pretext of the peace of the ministry remains silent, is a servant of Satan.

2. The Canons of the Monastery of Mār Mattai

a. *The Sources*

One cycle of canons is connected with one of the most famous monasteries in West Syrian monasticism, the Monastery of Mār Mattai[1]. This cycle of canons has survived only in a single manuscript, which emerges in the collection of Armenian manuscripts of the Mechitarists in Vienna, namely Ms. Vienna Mech. Syr 1[2]. There is no colophon in the manuscript but a note in Armenian that the manuscript was produced in

[1] Lit. «accepts the face of a man».
[2] II Kings V, 27.
[3] Mark V, 9, 13.
[4] Those who are meant here are the Diophysites.
[1] Vööbus, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient* II, p. 170. About this famous monk, see also Ms. Mār Mattai 193, fol. 36aff. Besides the story of this celebrated saint, the manuscript contains also a poem on him, fol. 107b-129a.
[2] Grill, «Eine unbekannte syrische Handschrift», p. 56.

the year 1321/2. The manuscript can not be so old. It is a volume of writings, various in character and it has preserved this piece of legislative source. It bears the title: «The ordinances and canons of the holy and divine Monastery of our father Mār Mattai and Mār Zakkai and Mār Abraham on the Mount of ʾElpheph, and of the healings of holy and famous Mār Behnām»[3].

Particularly precious is a comment about the origin of this cycle of canons. According to this we have here to do with an ancient source: «The canons were fixed and set up by the holy fathers, abbots and monks, who lived in this place, in the year 820 (according to the era) of Alexander; (they shall) not be trespassed»[4]. According to this note this source of canons comes from the year 508/9 A.D.

The cycle embraces twenty four canons. It is furnished with a proem, which deals with the foundation of the «laws of the monks». These are derived from the commandments in the Gospels. And what has been transmitted by the canons of the fathers, is also of divine origin.

The cycle is a conglomeration of ordinances revealing no order or system.

b. *The Canons*[1]

Canon 1. No monk is allowed to leave the monastery without a prayer asked of the abbot.

Canon 2. A monk who does not come to prayer at night shall be punished with a «week»[2].

For the same transgression a presbyter shall be excluded from his service for a week.

[3] ܬܘܩܢܐ ܘܩܢܘܢܐ ܕܥܘܡܪܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܘܐܠܗܝܐ ܕܐܒܘܢ ܡܪܝ ܡܬܝ، ܘܡܪܝ ܙܟܝ، ܘܡܪܝ ܐܒܪܗܡ ܕܒܛܘܪܐ ܕܐܠܦܦ ܘܕܐܣܘܬܐ ܕܩܕܝܫܐ ܘܡܫܡܗܐ ܡܪܝ ܒܗܢܡ ܣܗܕܐ.
[4] Fol. 108b. ܐܬܬܣܝܡܘ ܕܝܢ ܘܐܬܬܩܝܡܘ ܗܠܝܢ ܩܢܘܢܐ ܡܢ ܐܒܗܬܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܘܪ̈ܝܫܝ ܕܝܪܐ. ܘܕܝܪ̈ܝܐ ܕܥܡܪܘ ܒܗ ܒܕܘܟܬܐ ܗܕܐ. ܒܫܢܬ ܬܡܢܡܐܐ ܘܥܣܪܝܢ ܕܐܠܟܣܢܕܪܘܣ. ܕܠܐ ܡܬܥܒܪ̈ܢܐ ܢܗܘܘܢ.
[1] It is a matter of regret that during the translation of the textual materials and photographs from my home to the permanent location at the Institute for Syriac Manuscript Studies, some losses took place. Among those also the photographs of these canons. Attempts to secure new photographs have not yet been successful. Thus, instead of of a full translation of the canons, only a summary of each canon could be presented. Cf. Vööbus, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen* I, 12. B, p. 326ff.
[2] The period in the service of the community.

Canon 3. A monk, who during the day does not come to prayer, shall be punished «with a day»[3].

Canon 4. Half a dinar is foreseen as the penalty for a monk who beats another monk of his monastery.

Canon 5. A monk who reviles his fellow monk, shall pay five zuze as punishment and shall fast twenty days.

Canon 6. A monk, who rejects the judgement of the abbot or the community, and turns to the worldly people in order to seek help from them, shall pay one dinar as punishment, and he shall be excluded from the community for two months.

Canon 7. A monk who lies about his fellow monk, and whose lie can be confirmed by three witnesses, shall pay a dinar as punishment.

Canon 8. Rules for the introduction of an outsider into the monastery.

Canon 9. A monk caught in stealing, shall pay two dinars as punishment and shall be excluded from the monastery for three months.

Canon 10. Rules for the death of the monks and regulations for the distribution of their belongings[4].

Canon 11. A ruling as to how to distribute the belongings of a monk who has died in the country or on a pilgrimage.

Canon 12. Penal rules for a monk, who has become guilty of unchastity and whose guilt has been confirmed by three witnesses: his cell and his belongings will be given to the community and he shall be excluded from the community for a year.

Canon 13. Rules for the case when a traveller comes to the monastery.

Canon 14. It is forbidden for monks to eat something outside the refectory; punishment is foreseen for this transgression.

Canon 15. «All that stands under the key of the community, shall belong to all the monks in brotherly concord, those present as well as those absent; but that which comes from the outside shall be distributed among those who are present; the one absent has no part from it»[5].

Canon 16. «If the seal is on the property of the community»[6], this

[3] In the service of the community.

[4] ܪܚܠܗ = رخل «luggage».

[5] ܕܟܠܡܕܡ ܕܐܝܬ ܬܚܝܬ ܩܠܝܕܐ ܕܓܘܐ. ܢܗܘܐ ܐܫܘܝܘܬܐ ܠܟܠܗܘܢ ܕܗܪܟܐ. ܠܡܢ
ܕܡܫܬܟܚܝܢ. ܘܠܡܢ ܕܠܐ ܡܫܬܟܚܝܢ. ܘܗܘ ܡܕܡ ܕܐܬܐ ܡܢ ܠܒܪ. ܗܘ ܕܗܘ ܐܬܘܗܝ، ܢܬܦܠܓ
ܥܠ ܡܢ ܕܡܫܬܟܚܝܢ. ܘܗܘ ܕܠܐ ܡܫܬܟܚ ܠܝܬ ܠܗ ܡܢܬܐ ܡܢܗ.

[6] ܐܢܗܝ ܕܢܗܘܐ ܪܘܫܡܐ ܥܠ ܪܚܠܐ ܕܓܘܐ.

property is under the jurisdiction of the abbot and the elders; no one of the elders is entitled to remove the seal without the approval of the highest authority of the monastery. Penalties for the transgressors are added.

Canon 17. Rules for fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays; the fast must last until evening; for those who despise this rule, penalties are foreseen, «according to the canon of the apostles».

Canon 18. It is not allowed a monk to take his bread in the monastery before he receives a *burkta*[7]; an exception is allowed for the sick ones. Penalties for the transgressors are added.

Canon 19. Penal regulations for those who resist the will of the abbot.

Canon 20. A rule to avoid party inclinations in judgement; no one shall help the guilty one to escape punishment, should the transgressor be a monk, layman, *parnāsā*[8] or abbot.

Canon 21. No monk, layman or *parnāsā* shall allow himself whether out of ambition, hatred or envy to remove the abbot from his office.

Canon 22. Should there be a quarrel or confusion in the monastic community, then shall no monk inform outsiders about this; no layman is allowed to support a monk in doing this.

Canon 23. Rules for the regulation of economic matters regarding the monks newly received into the community.

Canon 24. Rules for the punishment of monks, who sleep outside the church or the monastery, and who despise the ordinance regarding the drinking of wine.

3. The Canons of Jōḥannān bar Qūrsōs

a. *The Sources*

That which has been related about the selfless endeavors of Jōḥannān bar Qūrsōs during the time of the battle that raged around the nascent Monophysite church has shown him to be a very energetic and consecrated shepherd, of demonstrated initiative and of stern resolve in lauching actions in the midst of a dangerous situation.

We are very fortunate that his efforts in the furtherance of monasticism stand on the record in historical documents. Several of these accounts come into account. We possess his circular sent to the

[7] ܒܘܪܟܬܐ.

[8] ܦܪܢܣܐ.

monasteries located around Tella[1]. There is evidence that he extended his efforts even farther[2]. These endeavors had the purpose of inspiring the monastic communities to commit themselves theologically to the Monophysite position. Finally from him we possess also a cycle of rules on monastic discipline, including canons designed to regulate the clergy.

The oldest form of his canons bears the title: «Admonitions and commandments in the form of canons for the clergy given by the holy Mār Jōḥannān bar Qūrsōs, bishop of Tella de-Mauzelat[3]. The preservation of the manuscript sources in this instance is a matter of special gratification; numerous unknown sources have come into our possession and in part they are very old.

The oldest attainable layer with respect to this cycle of canons is found in Ms. Mardin Orth. 310[4] which comes from the eighth century[5]. Ms. Vatican Syr. 560[6] also comes from the same century but this cycle is not complete[7]. Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 12,155[8], of the same century[9], too, is not complete[10].

Our search in the Syrian Orient[11] has been crowned with success and many unknown manuscript sources have come into our possession[12], including also the oldest witness which has already been introduced[13].

[1] Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,549, fol. 218b-226b. The known sources about the life of Jōḥannān of Tellā have been enriched by new records: Ms. Damascus Patr. 12/18, fol. 48b-56b; Ms. Mardin Orth. 261, p. 243-260; Ms. Mardin Orth. 275, fol. 82b-127b. See Vööbus, *Syriac Manuscripts*.

[2] A letter was sent to the monks in Amid, Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,663, fol. 2b-5a.

[3] ܙܘܗܪ̈ܐ ܘܦܘܩܕ̈ܢܐ ܕܐܬܝܗܒܘ ܒܕܡܘܬܐ ܕܩܢܘ̈ܢܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܠܟܠ ܩܠܝܪ̈ܘܣ ܠܩܕܝܫܐ ܡܪܝ، ܝܘܚܢܢ ܒܪ ܩܘܪܣܘܣ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܬܠܐ ܕܡܘܙܠܬ, Ms. Mardin Orth. 310, fol. 155b.

[4] Fol. 155b-160b.

[5] Vööbus, *Syriac Manuscripts*.

[6] Fol. 68b-72a.

[7] Van Lantschoot, *Inventaire*, p. 78. The text of this cycle breaks off after the first words of can. 20.

[8] Fol. 220b-222b.

[9] Probably the codex was written in the year 747 A.D. Wright, *Catalogue* II, p. 921, cf. p. 955.

[10] This cycle contains 27 canons.

[11] Ms. Paris Syr. 62, fol. 262a-267a of the 9th cent., Zotenberg, *Catalogue*, p. 29, cf. p. 28, and Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,527, fol. 25a-32a of the 11th cent., Wright, *Catalogue* II, p. 1036. Note from the editor: Under the circumstances, the disorder in this and the following footnotes could not be amended.

[12] Ms. Birmingham Syr. 8, fol. 189a-195b, copied in the year 1911 A.D., Mingana, *Catalogue* I, col. 36f.

[13] Ms. Damascus Patr. 8/11, fol. 64a-69a; the manuscript was written in the year 1204 A.D.

One source has emerged in a very unique document[14]. The number of other manuscript sources, although of younger origin but coming from different strata and eventually reaching back to ancient layers in the tradition, is quite impressive[15].

In this stream of preservation, a current emerges which goes its own way. It appears in Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,493[16] of the tenth century[17]. It is not a complete cycle but only a selection of canons[18]. Another type of the selected canons appears in Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,526[19] of the seventh century[20]. This cycle displays a different structure[21].

Still another type of cycle appears in Ms. Cambr. Add. 2023[22] of the thirteenth century[23]. This witness shows different motives at work in the selection of canons than in the previous cycle[24]. There is still another type of the cycle[25] but it is not idependent since it rests upon the codification work of Bar ʿEbrāyā.

The manuscripts in the British Museum and in the National Library of Paris have been edited long ago[26]. The canons for monasticism are now available in a critical edition[27].

The cycle of these canons is furnished with a preamble[28] which affirms

[14] *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition* I, ed. Vööbus, p. 145ff.

[15] Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 87, fol. 157b-162b, copied in the year 1907 A.D.; the text is defective since all that comes after can. 19 has disappeared. Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 73, fol. 209a-216b was copied in the year 1911; it is also defective but not in the sections important for this study. Ms. Mardin Orth. 322, fol. 89a-97a, written by a recent hand. Ms. Mardin Orth. 327, fol. 128b-136a is another copy by a modern hand. Ms. Mardin Orth. 337, fol. 86a-92b, displaying a gap but not affecting the parts important for this study. Ms. Mardin Orth. 458, fol. 1b-2a is a cycle which includes only can. 11 and 27. Ms. Damascus Patr. 8/2, fol. 86a-94b was copied in the year 1938 A.D. and Ms. Damascus Patr. 8/1, fol. 30b-39a was copied in the year 1941 A.D.

[16] Fol. 151b-152b.

[17] Wright, *Catalogue* I, p. 219.

[18] The cycle has been supplemented with a canon which is not found elsewhere, about the misuses of the gifts brought to the martyria, see Vööbus, *Syriche Kanonessammlungen* I, 1,A, p. 160f.

[19] Fol. 31a-32b.

[20] Perhaps the manuscript was written soon after the year 641 A.D., Wright, *Catalogue* II, p. 1033, cf. p. 1036.

[21] Canons important for monasticism have been left out here.

[22] Fol. 245a-250b.

[23] Wright-Cook, *Catalogue* II, p. 600.

[24] Can. 3-4, 8-9, 11-13, 15, 17 and 24.

[25] Ms. Vatican Syr. 353, fol. 122a-123b of the 18th cent.; Mai, *Codices chaldaici*, p. 37.

[26] By Kuberczyk, *Canones Johannis bar Cursus* with a Latin translation; a French translation was published by Nau, *Canons et résolutions*, p. 20ff.

[27] *Syriac and Arabic Documents*, ed. Vööbus, p. 57ff.

[28] Can. 1.

that the very foundation and guarantee of the true faith is assured by the bearers of the sacred tradition, namely Severos and 'Aksenāyā. They are the ultimate authorities in matters of Monophysite doctrine[29].

b. *The Canons*

(1) Those who have taken upon themselves to live the monastic life, it is evident that they have made[1] the promise of the way of life of the angels to live for the Messiah.

(2) For this, as if in another world, they have moved from towns and villages to lonely monasteries.

(3) According to their promise, then, it is fitting always to live in the truth and in the life elevated above marriage. For, when the carnal Israel, when it was prepared to go out to meet God on the Mount of Sinai, they received an order through Moses[2] that they should be sanctified and to wash their garments, and not to approach wives, how much more it is fitting for this monastic garment to be always in holiness.

(4) Because of this they do not only go out to approach God, but they also crucify themselves to the world, and to its lusts, in order that the Messiah may dwell and live in them.

(5) Therefore one who is a monk and has intercourse with the world, shall not dare to receive the ordination of priesthood.

(6) But in order that every suspicion may be removed you, the monks, women shall not enter your monasteries.

(7) Decorate yourselves not only with the hidden works but also with those which are visible; therefore put on the tunics of hair in order that the sorrow of the suffering of your Lord shall always be seen through you; and so we find many saints who in this humble garment approach God so that they may find mercy for themselves and for their people.

(8) Receive strangers diligently, for the Apostle has said this, when he was urging the Hebrew brothers: «The love of brothers shall stay in you, and you shall not forget the love of the strangers, for in this way some became worthy to receive angels without knowing»[3].

[29] As a consequence, a complete avoidance with any intercourse with the adherents of the Chalcedonense, the Letter of Leo and the followers of Julian of Halicarnassus. The canons demand suffering for the truth even until death.

[1] Lit. «promised».

[2] Exod. XIX, 10, 14-15.

[3] Hebr. XIII, 1-2.

(9) Advise the seculars to bring up their children in the instruction and teaching of our Lord, according to the apostolic precept.

(10) Those who have children dedicated to the *qeyāmā*[4], shall give them a decent garment from their childhood so that they do not become luxurious in white linen garments.

(11) They shall be sent into the monasteries to read books and to learn conduct in the fear of God. For if many send their children to far-off countries because of the instruction of this world, how much more fitting it is for those who have set apart and offered their children to God, that they have to send them into the holy monasteries for their spiritual wisdom.

c. *The Rules for the Monastery Mār Zakkai.*

a. The Source

By a fortunate chance, something is preserved from total oblivion in a manuscript which offers information about another cycle of canons established by Jōḥannān bar Qūrsōs, bishop of Tellā. This information is found nowhere else. In this case, the collection was made only for monks, as the prescript reports, namely, for the monks in the Monastery of Bēt Mār Zakkai, which was located in the vicinity of Qalliniqos[1].

The document bears the title: «The canons ... which the holy Jōḥannān of Tellā has set up for the regulation of the monks, for those in Bēt Mār Zakkai, which is by the side of Qalliniqos ...». This document appears in Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 87[2], a very interesting manuscript which, though not ancient[3], has preserved a number of precious legislative documents[4]. This is the only source in which this text has been preserved together with the title of the cycle.

There is another witness but it brings the canon at the wrong place[5]. The unknown compiler must have found it somewhere else. Textually it shows differences from the cycle in question.

The text of this canon has been edited[6].

[4] ܩܝܡܐ.

[1] VÖÖBUS, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen* I, 1, B, p. 334ff.

[2] Fol. 333a-334b.

[3] The manuscript was copied in the year 1907 A. D.

[4] VÖÖBUS, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen* I, 1, B, p. 469ff.

[5] Ms. Cambridge Add. 2023, fol. 290b-291a of the 13th cent., WRIGHT-COOK, *Catalogue* II, p. 600 has placed it at the end of the series of the resolutions by Ja'qōb of Edessa.

[6] *Syriac and Arabic Documents*, ed. VÖÖBUS, p. 61.

The text of this cycle of canons has not survived with the exception of a single canon. The extent of the cycle is unknown. The only canon which did survive, however, was numbered Can. 48.

The initial suspicion that this canon had perhaps been confused with the cycle of the canons given for the clergy[7] soon disappears. This text makes it clear that we have here to do with a remnant of an independent cycle about which information has been preserved only here. This canon does not appear in the cycle of the canons designed for clergy. It appears as an entirely new piece. It deals with a custom during the distribution of the sacramental bread and wine to give more *margānyātā*[8] and wine to the members of the elite of the monastic community who, in particular, have fasted very rigorously. Jōḥannān regarded this practice as a deviation and wanted to abrogate it.

Secondly, the text leaves no room whatsoever for a doubt that this resolution was set up for the monastic community. The canon begins with a clear reference to the monks in the monastery. The text reads: «For because there are in the monastery as *nazīrē*[9] of excellence, not only from wine but also from bread and from the rest of other food [stuffs] ...». A concession had been made to this elite in the monastic community in the practice of communion.

It is necessary to point out that in this canon Jōḥannān saw in Rabbūlā of Edessa an authority on which to rely in his decision on this matter. By the way, our source throws light on a literary critical problem in connection with the letter sent to Gamallīnōs[10] which now has found resolution[11].

b. The Rules

48. For because there are in the monastery abstinents[1] of excellence[2], not only from wine but also from bread and from the rest of other food (stuffs) such as these.

We have heard that there is a practice[3] which they do in ignorance: at

[7] See page 175ff.

[8] «Pearls» as a metaphorical term for a piece of eucharistic bread, see BRIGHTMAN, *Liturgies Eastern and Western*, p. 585.

[9] «Nazirates», «abstinents», «ascetics».

[10] *Opera selecta*, p. 231f.

[11] Jōḥannan has used the letter sent to Gamallīnōs whose author is Rabbūlā, VÖÖBUS, «Solution du problème de l'auteur de la lettre adressée à Gamallinos», p. 297ff.

[1] Lit. «Nazirites».

[2] Lit. «of distinction».

[3] Lit. «decree».

the time when they distribute the body and blood, they give more *margānyātā* to these fasters and again from the cup of remission. So they do.

However, we think that because this is alien to the fear of God, this should not be. For it is enough that the priest shall give one *margānītā* or three; in the same way also from the cup of redemption in the great order, they shall receive the remission of their debts — in order that it may not be fulfilled on them what is spoken by the blessed Rabbūlā, bishop of Edessa, about those who are like those who are greedy dogs eating their Lord.

It is a matter of deep regret that only this remnant of this cycle of canons was allowed to live on while the rest of it perished. The whole would certainly have been more important for our knowledge about life in the Monastery of Bēt Mār Zakkai and about the history of monasteries than a regulation about an aberration in liturgical practice. Nevertheless, we do at least learn about the existence of another cycle of canons composed by Jōḥannān bar Qūrsōs. Thanks to the very lucky circumstance that some compiler became interested in this piece and included it in his manuscript, this vestige has been preserved for history.

Regarding the relationship of Jōḥannān bar Qūrsōs to this particular monastery, we know that he lived there before he was elevated to the bishop's seat[4]. It is also known that this was the monastery in which he lived for a time after his expulsion from his bishopric[5]. It can be said safely that these canons were established after he had left the community of Bēt Mār Zakkai as a monk.

4. The Canons for the Nuns

a. *The Source*

A singular cycle of rules[1] for nuns has been preserved in a unique codex to which we are also indebted for all the information which is available[2]. We owe its existence to the lucky circumstance that the last folio of this codex did not fall out of the codex or become so hopelessly

[4] 'ELIYA., *Vita Johannis*, ed. BROOKS, p. 45.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 56.

[1] VÖÖBUS, «Die Rolle der Regeln im syrischen Mönchtum», p. 389ff.

[2] WRIGHT, *Catalogue* II, p. 1037.

damaged as to be entirely illegible. To be sure, the margin of the text has suffered severely, so that it is impossible to decipher all of its readings and many a line has become so pale that its sense is painfully difficult to recover. Indeed, the whole text has a very tired look. This monument in Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 17,216[3] is highly interesting and important because it is the only remnant of this genre of monastic legislation. Furthermore, even Bar ʿEbrāyā did not reveal any knowledge of this cycle of rules when he compiled his work of codification. All the more then does this parchment folio, a very unique document, deserve our interest[4].

The title of this set cannot be deciphered — the text has suffered too much.

The injunctions in it are formulated as canons and are enumerated from one to fourteen. Each of these canons begins with the same stereotyped formula: «It is not lawful for any of the sisters». Thus this cycle is designated for a community of nuns. Given the character of the regulation, that would alone suffice to assign such a cycle a special place among monastic legislative sources as a unique exponent of this genre of records. In the entire stream of canonical texts this cycle stands alone.

Several aspects of the coenobitic life have found treatment here: life in the convent, the behavior of the nuns while on the outside, questions of administration, questions of behavior towards one another, strong regulations in the interest of the virtue of virginity, and injunctions for spiritual duties.

It is a matter of regret that nothing is known about the origin and provenance of this most interesting cycle. The introductory lines, which perhaps conceal some vital information, are so damaged that it is impossible to decipher their contents. Under these circumstances, the only information we have is that which the rest of this folio can tell us. This, however, is very meager.

The rules in the interest of the care of the virtue of virginity include one which does not permit the nuns to visit the anchorites, recluses and the stylites in order to bring them alms[5]. The reference to the stylites points out that the rules presuppose a milieu beginning with the middle of the fifth century. This form of asceticism expanded after this period[6]. On

[3] *Syriac and Arabic Documents*, ed. VÖÖBUS, p. 64-68.
[4] VÖÖBUS, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen* I, 1,B, p. 355ff.
[5] Can. 2.
[6] The originator of this strange form of monastic life was Šemʿōn who lived about 37 years on columns of different height until his death in 459 A.D. Cf. VÖÖBUS, *History of Asceticism* II, p. 208ff.

the other hand, palaeographically the hand seems to belong to the eighth century. Of course, this may have no bearing at all — the source may have been produced much earlier.

Still less can be guessed about the eventual place of origin. If we allow ourselves to be guided by certain linguistic observations[7], then it would appear that we have to seek its home not in Mesopotamia but in the western orbit of Syrian monasteries, in Syria where the impact of the Greek terminology could be much more understandable.

On the following pages, that which is brought forward of the text of the cycle is the result of much wrestling, of the struggle which slowly has evinced more and more of the secrets of the pale vellum folio[8]. What in many examinations the eye could not detect in the manuscript, a document itself riddled with gaps, in which the meaning of many sentences remained obscure, ultraviolet photography has helped to expose. Even so, unfortunately, not all of the gaps could be bridged precisely because this, the last folio, has suffered unduly from wear and tear. But at last the thought has become clear and the remaining gaps reduced to insignificance, except in a few instances.

The text of this cycle has been edited[9], even twice[10].

b. *The Canons*

Canon 1. It is not lawful for any of the sisters to go out from (the monastery) ... alone, without one of the sisters, these who (have received) the garment, ... without (telling?) the abbess, expressly as to where she wishes to go nor to go (anywhere) except to where she had been asked (to go) ....

Canon 2. It is not lawful for any of the sisters of the monastery to go out to an eating house to eat and drink ..., nor to go the vigils in the assembly (in honor) of the martyrs, not in the town nor outside the town; and also not to go to the vigils ... or wakes or funerals, and also not to banquets, but whoever wants to go to pray in the church of the holy ones

[7] Can. 2 speaks of τὸ ὀξύφυλλον. It is a strange term and SMITH, *Thesaurus syriacus* I, col. 55 does not throw any possible light on its meaning. Also MARGOLIOUTH, *Supplement to the Thesaurus Syriacus*, p. 19 does not offer any help. Inscripts also do not throw more light on this expression. It is possible that it is a corrupt form, behind it may be the Greek term ἔξω πύλον.
[8] Fol. 43a.
[9] *Syriac and Arabic Documents*, ed. VÖÖBUS, p. 64ff.
[10] By Jargy.

on the days ... she shall go if she has with her a female companion according to the authority of the first canon.

Canon 3. It is not lawful for any of the sisters ... something of hers outside the monastery and because of this to go and to roam. And also no stranger shall place something with her ... except only a book, unless he is her father or fleshly brother or her mother or her sister ... through the permission of the abbess.

Canon 4. It is not lawful for any of the sisters to eat anything in the whole town ... to drink except only water.

Canon 5. It is not lawful for any of the sisters to eat with the men, not in the monastery or outside the monastery, except he is her father or her fleshly brother or her father's brother or her mother's brother; and this through the permission of the abbess. And she also shall not eat bread outside of the *bēt de-qūnaōn*[1], destined for this purpose, or in the gate porch except she goes on a necessary journey ... and if she sits at the table of the *qūnaōn* of the entire house, she (shall not) let that a man should sleep or rest[2] in the inner monastery, entirely not ....

Canon 6. It is not lawful for any of the sisters to enter alone a house with a man, not inside the monastery nor outside the monastery; she shall also speak with a man on the street without her female companion ... who goes out with her, except ... greeting ... if he is her father or fleshly brother; it also shall not be lawful for them to follow closely the monks on the street, not, ... in order that they do not betray ....

Canon 7. It is not lawful for any of the sisters to enter inside the vestibule or the court of the monastery of the monks (nor shall they let in) the monks inside the gate of their monasteries, except if the monk is an old priest ... on Sunday in order to consecrate to them the eucharist; and they shall not enter the monastery of the Orientals nor the monastery ... except in case (of a funeral) they enter with the departed one and go out with the entire community of those who accompany the departed one. And they shall not (visit the solitaries) on the mount or recluses[3] or the stylites with the pretext to make alms to them or to bring them an offering[4]; (except) for an old *sa'urtā*[5] who has been appointed

[1] ܒܝܬ ܩܘܢܘܢ.

[2] Lit. «loosen his girdle».

[3] ܚܒܝܫܐ.

[4] Or does it mean here the eucharist?

[5] ܣܥܘܪܬܐ.

by each monastery for the purpose that through her hands the alms shall be sent.

Canon 8. It is not lawful for any of the sisters to receive (the responsibility of administering a) baptism, except if the one to be baptized is a pagan or a little girl (to be baptized) in expediency of ... only (so) it is permitted ... and through permission of the *sa'urā*[6] or the abbess.

Canon 9. It is not lawful for any of the sisters to borrow from somebody nor to lend; nor to write a letter nor to receive from anybody, without the knowledge of the abbess, except (her father) or her mother or her fleshly brother or her father's brother or her mother's brother or her sister.

Canon 10. It is not lawful for any (of the sisters) (to neglect) ... or the evening or the morning prayer or the eucharistic liturgy on the day of Sunday, or to go on the day of Sunday from her monastery at all ... eucharist, except in suffering ... necessity; except those who are being sent or (who remain) in the outskirt ... or because of other pressing business that exists in the community; but who neglects one of these ... except in the case of sickness, she shall fast from the meal and from wine for two days ....

Canon 11. It is not lawful for any of the sisters to go on a journey that is farther more than one mile without (the permission) of the *sa'urtā*.

Canon 12. It is not lawful for any of the sisters to raise a hand against her companion or to accuse (her) and to ... (but whoever dares and) beats her companion shall be excluded from the eucharist and from the meal and from wine for one month ... and abuses (her) bodily, and calls her companion with foul names, and ... her, she shall fast from (the meal) ....

Canon 13. It is not lawful for any of the sisters that she engage herself (in worldly intercourse?) ... except (it be) because of necessary business, except she has an evident (cause), she shall not go out of her monastery.

Canon 14. It is not lawful for any of the sisters to go to the monasteries of the monks on any pretext ....

[6] ܣܥܘܪܐ.

5. The Canons for the Novices

a. *The Sources*

Among these various monastic legislative records there is one which occupies a particular place — the rules given for the novices[1]. Thus we have to do with a unique source which allows us a look into the training of the beginners in the monastic communities in Syrian monasticism. In addition to these insights, the document also represents us with an interesting cultural historical record.

The title of this cycle as it appears in the oldest attainable manuscript[2] is: «On the order of the novice-brothers»[3]. However, the cycle as it appears in another source[4] also has a different title: «The door on the order of the novice-brothers»[5].

This record must be considered a very great rarity. In the entire genre of this kind of literature, only occasionally do some regulations and ordinances about the preparation for the beginners in monastic life appear. Let it be noted, however, that no other single cycle of ordinances devoted exclusively to the institution of the novices exists.

The oldest attainable witness[6] brings this cycle of regulations forward anonymously. Only in later traditions is it associated with the writings of Jōḥannān of Dalyātā[7]. As investigation shows, this took place as the outcome of a very complicated process in the history of the preservation[8] of these regulations.

The collection of these regulations has appeared in a critical edition[9]

[1] Vööbus, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen* I, 1, p. 336ff.

[2] Ms. Sinai Syr. 24, fol. 191b.

[3] ܥܠ ܛܘܟܣܐ ܕܐܚ̈ܐ ܫܒܪ̈ܐ.

[4] Ms. Jerusalem Mark 88, fol. 98a.

[5] ܬܪܥܐ ܥܠ ܛܘܟܣܐ ܕܐܚ̈ܐ ܫܘܪ̈ܝܐ.

[6] Ms. Sinai Syr. 24 is a codex which has been ascribed to the 10th cent., Smith-Lewis, *Catalogue*, p. 41. Yet this beautiful parchment codex, written in an elegant Estrangela script, on the basis of palaographical considerations may well come from the 9th cent.

[7] See page 334ff.

[8] Vööbus, *Syrische Kanonssammlungen* I, 1,B, p. 336ff.

[9] Vööbus, «Syrische Verordnungen für die Novizen», p. 106ff. After the oldest in Ms. Sinai Syr. 24 comes Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,729 of the 12th or the 13th cent., Wright, *Catalogue* II, p. 584; Ms. Vatican Syr. 126, of the 13th cent., Assemani, *Catalogus* III, p. 156ff.; Ms. Vatican Syr. 124, of the 14th or the 15th cent., *ibid.*, III, p. 148ff.; Ms. Mardin Orth. 417, of the year 1473/4 A.D., Vööbus, *Syriac Manuscripts*; Ms. Mār Mattai 27, of the year 1484/5 A.D.; Ms. Mardin Orth. 418, of the 15th cent., Vööbus,

which rest on a dozen manuscripts, the oldest of which comes from the ninth century[10]. This row of manuscripts among the variety of witnesses[11] includes also a manuscript which gives us an idea about the accretions which took place during the history of these regulations[12].

b. *The Canons*

On the order[1] of the novice-brothers[2]

This is the chaste order which is pleasing the Lord.

(1) The eyes of a person shall not look in every direction but shall look only before himself.

(2) He shall not speak excessively but only speak on those (matters) which are necessary.

(3) He shall use only miserable clothing to serve the satisfaction of the needs of the body.

(4) He shall use nourishment, that is, for the sustenance of the body (only) and not in greed, and above all shall eat (only) a little; he shall not despise (these prescriptions) and fill his stomach with what his will chooses; prudence is the virtue of all virtues.

(5) He shall drink wine only exceptionally, when he is with others or because of weakness or illness.

(6) He shall not interrupt the one who speaks and he shall not speak as one who is without discipline, but he shall be longsuffering as a wise man.

(7) Wherever he may be present, he shall be as an inferior one and a servant of his brothers.

(8) He shall not expose one of his members in front of anyone.

(9) He shall not touch the body of anyone except on account of necessity; and he shall not allow his body to be touched by anyone except on account of necessity.

Syriac Manuscripts; Ms. Br. Mus. Orient. 4074 of the 15th cent., Margoliouth, *Descriptive List*, p. 23f. Other manuscripts, except Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 181 which belongs to the 16th cent., are much younger. See Vööbus, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen* I, 1,B, p. 339ff.

[10] Still other sources could be ferreted out in the Syrian Orient: Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 232, quire 6, fol. 10b-quire 7, fol. 1b; Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 310, p. 957-959; Ms. Baghdad Chald. Patr. 6021, fol. 51a-56b; Ms. 6022, p. 66-78; a volume in yellow leather with measurements 21,5 × 15cm., has no signature; these canons appear on fol. 56a-61b.

[11] Vööbus, «Ein Zyklus von Verordnungen», p. 37ff.

[12] Ms. ʾAlqōš 235 which was copied in the year 1889 A.D., Vosté, *Catalogue*, p. 91.

[1] ܛܘܟܣܐ, τάξις, «arrangement», «ordinance».

[2] ܕܐܚ̈ܐ ܫܘܪ̈ܝܐ, «of the beginner brothers».

(10) He shall be on his guard against intimacy[3] as from a murderous death.

(11) In sleeping he shall impose on chaste regulation in order that his guardian angel may not depart from him.

(12) If it be possible, no one shall see him when he sleeps.

(13) In the presence of someone, he shall not spit.

(14) When coughing befalls him at the table, he shall turn his face from the table and (only) then he shall cough.

(15) He shall eat and drink modestly so as it is fitting for God's sons[4].

(16) In the presence of his companions he shall not stretch out his hand insolently.

(17) When a stranger[5] shall sit with him, he shall urge him two or three times for eating.

(18) He shall take (something) quietly and place (it) on the table, and he shall not despise it (by the rule of behavior).

(19) At the table his feet and his clothing shall be under control.

(20) When he yawns, he shall cover his mouth, so that it will not be seen and restrain his breath until it passes over.

(21) If he enters the cell — whether of his teachers or of his disciple or of his friend — he shall behave in precaution not to see and touch these (things) which are there; even if he through the owner is constrained to do this, he shall not be persuaded; everyone who is arrogant in this (respect) is a stranger to the schema[6] of the monks and Christ who is its giver.

(22) He shall not look into the place where the receptacles[7] of the cell[8] of his friend stand.

(23) He shall close and open the door quietly — his own as well as that of others — so that its noise is not audible.

(24) In his walking he shall not hurry unless by reason of necessity.

(25) In all he shall be submissive and obedient; (but) he shall not

[3] ܦܐܪܗܣܝܐ, «confidence», παρρησία.

[4] «Servants» in Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,729, Ms. Vatican Syr. 126, Ms. Cambridge Add. 1999 and Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 181

[5] ܐܟܣܢܝܐ, ξένος.

[6] ܐܣܟܡܐ, σχῆμα.

[7] ܡ̈ܐܢܐ, «vessels», «utensils».

[8] ܩܠܝܬܐ, κέλλια.

adhere to one who is captivated by passions or money or worldly (things) so that he will not become a servant of Satan.

(26) He shall talk with everyone in a friendly way and see at every man chastely.

(27) He shall not satisfy his eyes by (the seeing) of the face[9] of a person.

(28) If he goes on the road, he shall not proceed before someone who is older than he.

(29) If for any reason his companion remains behind, he shall go on only a little and wait until he comes. The one who does not do this is dull as a pig which is lawless.

(30) If his companion speaks with people who meet him, he shall wait and shall not urge the one who speaks.

(31) The one who is sound shall say to the one who was sick for a time: «Come let us eat».

(32) He shall scold no person because of his guilt[10] whatever it may be, but shall in all (things) regard[11] himself guilty.

(33) He shall select every low duty[12] in order to do it in humility.

(34) If he laughs, he shall not bare his teeth.

(35) If he must speak with women, he shall speak while turning his face away from her gaze.

(36) He shall keep himself far from the daughters of the covenant[13] as from the snare of Satan — from their meeting, their intercourse[14], and their gaze, so that the contempt of unclean passions shall not overpower him.

(37) Even if they are his natural sisters, he shall in all (things) guard (himself) against (them) as against strangers.

(38) He shall guard himself against the fellowship with the members of his family[15] so that his heart may not become cold in the love of God.

(39) He shall keep himself far from friendship and intimacy[16] with boys as from friendship with the evil (one).

[9] ܦܪܨܘܦܐ, πρόσωπον.

[10] ܣܟܠܘܬܐ.

[11] Lit.: «shall make».

[12] ܣܘܥܪܢܐ.

[13] ܒܢ̈ܬ ܩܝܡܐ.

[14] Or.: «association».

[15] Or.: «relatives».

[16] ܦܪܗܣܝܐ, παρρησία.

(40) He shall have a counselor[17], a close acquaintance[18] and companion[19] who fears the Lord and is at peace in his soul, poor in his (outward) life but rich in the mysteries of God.

(41) On the other hand his own secrets and ways[20] he shall keep (to himself) from every man, and his troubles[21] and struggles[22] he shall not reveal.

(42) He shall not remove his monastic garb except on account of necessity[23] — so that he shall not be seen by anyone (without it).

(43) For his natural needs, he shall go out with becomingness — out of respect before his guardian angel.

(44) In all things he shall behave himself in the fear of God and under the constraint (of the thought of) death — even if his heart is not willing.

(45) It would be better for him to eat deadly poison[24] than to eat with a woman, even if she should be his (own) mother or sister.

(46) It would be better for him to dwell with a dragon than to cover someone with (his) monastic garb[25] and sleep — not even if he is his natural brother.

(47) If the one who is older than he, on the road or in an occupation, says to him: «Come, let us sing (songs)» he shall obey; if not, his tongue shall be quieted and his heart praise God.

(48) He shall neither quarrel about anything.

(49) He shall neither chatter nor lie.

(50) He shall not swear in the name of the Lord.

(51) He shall be despised but not himself despise; he shall suffer hard but he himself shall not harm.

(52) It is better that the (things) of the body perish with the body than (that) one of those (things) of the soul should be lacking.

(53) With no one shall he utter a judgement but he shall endure all, even if he be just and sentenced as a guilty one.

[17] ܒܪ ܐܪܙܗ, «a sharer of a secret».

[18] ܘܒܪ ܝܕܥܬܗ, «an intimate acquaintance».

[19] ܫܘܬܦܗ, «partaker», «associate».

[20] ܕܘܒܪܘܗܝ, «manner of life».

[21] ܥܡܠܐ, «labors», «travails».

[22] Or.: «his battles», «wars».

[23] ܐܢܢܩܐ, ἀνάγκη.

[24] ܣܡ ܡܘܬܐ.

[25] ܐܣܟܡܐ.

(54) His soul shall love nothing of the (things) of the world.

(55) He shall obey the rulers[26] but he shall stay far from their fellowship. That is a snare which catches the negligent ones unto perdition. You, a greedy friend of the stomach, for you it were better — if it were possible — to put fiery coals into the stomach than to (experience) the tortures of the rulers.

(56) Being removed from every man and bereft of them, he shall pour out his pity over every man.

(57) He shall refrain from much talking since this extinguishes the fiery impulses, evoked by God, from the heart.

(58) He shall flee from the disputes with his household members and friends as from a rending lion.

(59) He shall not live in the proximity of the angry ones and the quarrelsome ones in order that his (own) heart may not be filled with anger and the darkness of error may not rule in his soul.

(60) He shall not dwell with a boaster that the activity[27] of the Holy Spirit shall not be taken from his soul and he (thus) becomes the dwelling place of all the evil passions.

If you keep all the ordinances[28], o man, and upon every occasion ocupy yourself with meditation about God, truly, within a short time it will be for your soul (thusly), that it in itself shall see the light of Christ and not be blinded forever.

Glory to Him from those who love Him. Amen.

6. The Canons for the Solitaries

a. *The Source*

That the genre of ordinances and regulations for the life which concerns the sphere reserved for the elite in Syrian monasticism can be supplemented with another discovery which allows us very important insights into this particular phenomenon, that is most welcome.

This cycle tells us that its rules were designed as «ordinances and canons of the solitaries who are in the wilderness»[1]. Given the character

[26] ܪܫܢܐ.

[27] ܡܬܕܒܪܢܘܬܐ.

[28] ܐܘܪܚܬܐ, «admonitions», «warnings», «provisions».

[1] ܦܘܩܕܢܐ ܘܩܢܘܢܐ ܕܝܚܝܕܝܐ ܕܒܡܕܒܪܐ.

of these injunctions, this cycle occupies a special place among these texts, opening insights into the sphere preserved for the elite in the monastic movement[2].

The new document, a discovery which is most welcome, is very rare. These regulations have survived in a unique source, Ms. Mardin Orth. 426[3]. The codex which has preserved this great rarity in itself however is not old[4]. All attempts which have been made to trace other vestiges of this cycle have remained without result.

This cycle of twelve canons is a kind of vademecum regarding the ground and basic requirements for the form of life to which the solitaries dedicated themselves. These formulations also impress one through their refined from, one which aims at lapidary expression and concentration upon the essential.

That these injunctions breathe the true spirit of Syrian asceticism can be felt at every step. The requirements which are of particular importance for this form of life and basic for its existence are thoughtfully placed at the beginning of the cycle.

In a certain sense this cycle is a pearl. It is concerned about the deepest theme in the life of the elite in Syrian monasticism. The issue here is this, that an *iḥīdāyā* must prove himself not only according to his outward appearance but by remaining true to his inward core. The first part of the formulations[5] is devoted to fundamental questions regarding the meaning and aim of the highest level in the ascetic realm. The heights of the pneumatic niveau are reached with the enjoyment of the «contemplation» of the *iḥīdāyūtā*[6]. The latter part of the injunctions is devoted to the means of obtaining that perfection. Here we have to do with a composition which also displays discipline as well as a sense of order.

b. *The Canons*

Canon 1[1]. The attention of a solitary[2] shall not be directed to outward phenomena but to the inside.

2 VÖÖBUS, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen* I, 1,B, p. 373ff.
3 Fol. 5b-6a.
4 VÖÖBUS, *Syriac Manuscripts*.
5 The manuscript comes from the 16th or 17th cent.
6 ܝܚܝܕܝܘܬܐ.

1 The following text gives the summary of the canons according to their content.
2 ܝܚܝܕܝܐ.

Canon 2. The solitary must obtain his inner peace, and therefore he cannot be in the intercourse with people.

Canon 3. It is forbidden a solitary to be in free intercourse with men.

Canon 4. A solitary should not leave his cell.

Canon 5. A solitary shall not cease from praise[3]; (this term covers all cultic acts).

Canon 6. A solitary shall not cease from manual work.

Canon 7. The canon prescribes fasting from one evening to the other.

Canon 8. A solitary is allowed to use only a little of bread, oil and water.

Canon 9. Every satisfaction in eating and sleep is forbidden for a solitary.

Canon 10. The canon prescribes the spiritual attitude of a solitary: «The solitary shall always be in mourning, sorrowful, suffering and grieving»[4].

Canon 11. A solitary shall never be glad, laugh and be in a gay mood; such joy is carnal and as such must be rejected.

Canon 12. A solitary shall possess nothing except his faith.

3 ܬܫܒܘܚܬܐ.
4 ܗܘܐ ܝܚܝܕܝܐ ܐܒܝܠܐ ܘܟܪܝܐ ܘܚܫܝܫ ܘܥܩܐ ܒܟܠܥܕܢ.

VI. MONÀSTICISM DURING THE BIRTH PANGS OF THE MONOPHYSITE CHURCH

1. Historical Premises

Since our treatment is approaching very important events which introduced drastic changes in the Christian communities of Syria, Mesopotamia and Persia, and which also were to transform the spiritual and cultural complexion of the Syrian Orient, some preliminary comments are necessary. These should help us to understand the latent but vital forces involved, forces which became the premises for the development which was to occur.

The earliest extant sources of Syrian Christianity reveal a powerful spirit of self-consciousness looking toward independence. This longing is imprinted on every page of the historical record. That which stands at the very forefront of Tatian's[1] thought is profoundly instructive in this connection. It is his dislike, nay more, his hatred, for everything bearing a Greek or Roman label[2]. That kind of spirit shows itself in whatever direction we look. In fact, autonomy is the hallmark which stares us in the face in all of these sources. Syrian gnosis is the least Hellenized of all. The conception of the church, as conceived by Syrians, moves along independent avenues. Theological thought travels along quite indigenous lines in accord with the genius of the works of Aphrahaṭ[3] written decades after the Council of Nicea. In the same way does the pattern of Christian life carry its own attributes of sovereignty. Wherever we look, we see the same phenomenon driven by strong impulses to carve out a route of its own. This passion is an essential ingredient of the Syrian psyche. It is an order of rapture which can be perceived not only in literary sources but also in the frescos of early Syrian provenance in which pictures of the screaming and oversize dimensional figures of the Syrian deities are on view[4]. The flames of fury fairly scorch the parchment in the polemical writings of 'Aphrēm, Isḥāq, Rabbūlā and others. The fervor of fanat-

1 Vööbus, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient* I, p. 31ff.
2 His apology displays countless and reckless attacks upon everything Greek.
3 See page 18ff.
Vööbus, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient* II, p. 314f.

icism[5] leaps out of ascetic sources and the searing lava of mortification of every conceivable kind virtually scalds the works in which such accounts are recorded.

The subsequent history of Christianity in Syria and Mesopotamia becomes comprehensible only if those factors which excited the stimuli for development are taken into account. These elemental factors, in variegated ways, worked towards a trend which ultimately led to the nationalization of the church of the Syrians. Through these, the ascetic movement steadily grew in strength, pressing to the forefront, producing creative spirits. That was how it became a leading force, a phenomenon destined to play an essential role. It is manifested in the spectacular growth of monasticism in Syria and Mesopotamia during the fourth and the fifth centuries. The rapidity of this advance, spilling over from monasteries into caves and cliffs in the mountains, is truly surprising[6]. Special significance must accordingly be attached to this phenomenon in the history of Syrian spirituality. The attendant consequences for the religio-sociological sector were far-reaching. In the light of the immense veneration of the ascetics and monks by the religious masses, it is not difficult to understand how the care of souls gradually fell into the hands of the monks. Indeed, other sectors of the pastoral office also came under their control. The role which monasticism actually played in the religion of the Syrians was very profound. Developing its influence along many ways, monasticism came to exercise extraordinary functions in that society.

This influence was not limited solely to the religio-sociological sector. The monastic movement surged forward as a force capable of supplying creative spirits to widen the range of its activities in the cultural realm. These personalities were able to take over the leadership and to reinvigorate traditions which had been in operation in earlier times.

In the cultural field, we meet a constellation which can only evoke our admiration. The vigor of the Syrian spirit especially is manifested in the area of the native language. The future of the idiom of Edessa, the metropolis of Mesopotamia, after having been adopted as the vehicle for the Christian community, is little short of amazing. The élan attained by the Syriac language is astounding. As the idiom for the literary life, it had the power to absorb all other dialects; even a language like that of

5 *Ibid.*, II, p. 256ff.; 292ff.
6 *Ibid.*, I, p. 209ff.; II, p. 70ff.

Palmyra—widely used in the third century—could not retain its identity in the face of this tongue. A spirit of pride put it at the forefront of anti-Byzantine reaction. Except for functionaries and merchants, Syrians rarely spoke Greek[7]. More still—the determination by steady and ambitious growth to enhance the stature, this idiom, to make it a literary language of the world, is marked.

Aligned with this aggressive promotion of the language, there was an upsurge of new works to enrich the literary life. Like an artesian well, they began to flow abundantly. It is astounding how eagerly the Syrian began to cultivate literary values. Original creations were conceived to join the stream of works which fed and enriched the intellectual culture. Suddenly a classic was produced—through the person of 'Aphrēm, in behalf of the monastic movement. The Syrians began with unparalleled zeal to translate the literary riches produced by the Greeks. Almost everything they could lay hold of was made available in their own idiom. In turn, the national self-consciousness was excited by these new and positive stimuli.

Still other sources were produced to nourish this spirit of self-consciousness. The development of educational institutions, especially loci of higher studies, certainly gave added impetus to the national self-consciousness. Once the torch of learning was ignited in Edessa, it impressed itself upon the intellectual and cultural climate of the whole of the Syrian Orient. Antioch, Edessa, and Nisibis became the most important centers of the religious and national renaissance. A work on the School of Nisibis[8] describes the impact of this achievement in such areas as schooling, higher education, literary life, scholarly endeavors and mission work. Centers of higher education emerged not only in Edessa and Nisibis, but also elsewhere. This network delineates a most important milestone in the progressive advance in the intellectual arena. It is impossible to underestimate the impact of this development upon Syrian self-consciousness.

In view of such first-rate factors, one cannot overlook the social conditions of the time as revealed by our sources[9].

[7] John Chrysostom gives instructive insights into the situation in the surroundings of Antioch. He complains that the people who came from the countryside could not understand his preaching in Greek since they knew only Syriac as their mother tongue. See his homilies on the statues, particularly nr. XXI, PG. XLIX, ed. MIGNE; cf. also THEODORETOS, *Historia religiosa*, ed. MIGNE, col. 1400.

[8] VÖÖBUS, *History of the School of Nisibis*, p. 1ff.

[9] The abuses on the part of the bureaucracies was reckless. The peasantry particularly suffered severely. Economic conditions, poor at best, were aggravated all the more by the additional hardships imposed. The garrisons located in the communities and travelling functionaries caused endless bitterness with their exorbitant demands and chicanery in regard to food, lodging and so on. Abuses freely practiced by local administrations caused deep resentment, an affront not soon to be forgiven.

It is only when we take all these factors into consideration that we can begin to perceive the forces which had been operative in the Syrian Orient. These were forces looking toward and longing for a time to explode upon the scene.

2. The Beginning of the Turmoil

The Monophysites, after their defeat, kept the hope alive that, just as Eutyches was able to enjoy the favor of emperor Theodosios II, so might good fortune once again bring an emperor to the throne who would give them a new chance. Consequently, the struggle had to be continued.

Once the virus of dogmatic friction[1] was transplanted to the realm of the Syrians[2], it swiftly began to develop. In all too short a time, the Christological controversy divided the Christian communities in Syria into several fighting camps, the Monophysites, the adherents of the Chalcedonense and the Diophysites. It also affected monasticism which began to make preparations for drastic changes in its life and existence, leaving its life of contemplation, ascetism and the pursuit of spiritual things. Moreover, as time went on, monasticism became the most active champion of dogmatic formulas. As a result, a storm began to rage around these places of peace and quietness, engulfing them in unrest, gradually leading them into the turmoil of endless agitation.

Some time had to pass before Syrian monasticism as a whole was fully activated but when it did it became the main force in all of the doctrinal battles.

To involve particularly respected and influential monks in theological controversies for the purpose of using their authority to tip the scales in a desired direction, was a well tested tactic. Ascetics of repute had earlier found themselves in danger of being dragged into a war over the theological formulas. The battle around Šemʿōn the Stylite[3] serves as an

[1] FREND, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, p. 136ff., p. 260ff.

[2] LEBON, *Le monophysisne Sévérien*.

[3] VÖÖBUS, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient* II, p. 177f., 199f., 208ff. Consistent searching has been able to ferret out new important sources for the vita of Šemʿōn: Ms. Aleppo Orth. 27; Ms. Damascus Patr. 8/9, quire 1, fol. 1b-quire 6, fol. 6, fol. 2b and Ms. 12/17, fol. 53b-72b; Ms. Mardin Orth. 271, fol. 111b-196b; see VÖÖBUS, «Discovery of New Manuscript Sources for the Biography of Simon the Stylite».

illustration. Even before the Synod of Ephesus in 431, he became implicated[4]. The forces from the quarters of the Chalcedonense courted him, trying to hold him for their camp after he had been dragged into it by the opposition movement. But the Monophysites, however, did not abandon their efforts to win Šemʿōn back. Not only did rumors and claims abound, so did correspondence, even fabricated correspondence in his name to heat up the atmosphere. Indeed, the agitated and troubled epoch has put its imprint upon two letters preserved in the Monophysite florilegia purporting to be from the hand of Šemʿōn the Stylite but which are actually falsifications[5].

As the case of Šemʿōn the Stylite shows, not all of the monks were ready so quickly to interrupt the ascetic pursuit and indeed their calling and vocation in order to respond spontaneously to the call to dogmatic battle. The historical sources show that considerable segments in monasticism did not wholeheartedly accept such an outlook and whose spirit was one of reluctance. That the more peaceful development of monasticism above quarrel and warfare was a burning desire among many monks is evident in the sources. Eminent leaders in the Monophysite hierarchy had more than enough to do in order to prepare themselves for the battle[6]. On the part of the leadership, it was felt necessary not to leave the monks in peace while the battle was raging, when in the heat of combat every new voice and hand became important—measures to involve the monks were therefore mandatory. Thus the monastic communities were increasingly informed of the situation and stimulated to take active part in the struggle over the formulas, even though the formulas were not fully grasped by the ascetics and monks.

Propaganda was carried out on a large-scale basis. Admonitions and letters were sent not only to individual monasteries but to whole groups of them. Jōḥannān of Tellā sent instructions on dogmatic matters to the monasteries and convents of the nuns around Tellā reminding them of the need to be vigilant about spiritual and doctrinal purity against all the slyness and cunning of the heretics[7]. The undertaking of Philoxenos exceeds all the efforts made by others. He continued to send inflam-

[4] Reflections of this also appear in the Greek tradition, Antonios, *Vita Symeonis*, ed. LIETZMANN, p. 192f.

[5] Of 3 Syriac texts in this direction, at least 2 appear to be Monophysite falsifications; BAUMSTARK, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, p. 61.

[6] *Collectio documentorum*, ed. RAHMANI, p. 26.

[7] Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,549, fol. 219b.

matory messages to the monasteries instigating their inmates to take an even greater active part in the dogmatic struggles. In the first place, we must mention his rules. These rules under his name quintessentially reflect his bellicose spirit. He kept on sending circular letters to the monastic communities with the aim of stirring up sentiment against the Chalcedonense. His arguments no less than the way in which he handles this task demonstrate that considerable circles cared little for these quarrels but who thought, as monks living in isolation, that they had only to worry about the pursuit of their ascetic duties. Philoxenos brands such a view simple-minded and dangerous. He tries to undermine such an attitude with the argument that, since truth is comparable to the head, all ascetic works and life are only members of the body. He presses home the point that the members will not profit at all if the head is in danger. In plain language that meant that it made no sense for them to live in monastic communities pursuing their ascetic duties while the battle for the truth was raging. This was his favorite theme and it occurs again and again: the orthodox faith cannot simply be possessed, it must also be protected and defended against those bent upon corrupting it[8].

Further, Philoxenos launches sharp attacks against those monks who, as he has been informed, are of the opinion that it is their task to keep the right faith to themselves, and to refuse to take part in the battle. He summons all monks to abandon such an attitude of isolation, instigates them to do so with anathemas against Nestorius, Eutyches, their disciples and any and all who support such views. Philoxenos alarmed the monks in the monasteries of Bēt Gaugal, warning them of the wolves, representing paganism and Judaism, who were undermining the true faith[9]. In another letter Philoxenos pours out his wrath upon those monks who have remained reluctant, accusing them either of having received gifts from the adversaries or of fear or of wanting to be friends with everybody. One report describes how Philoxenos in his zeal himself went around to the monasteries and personally instigated and inspired the monastic communities to engage in the actions of battle.

Coming back to the rules established by Philoxenos, it must be said that this cycle crystallizes all of his arguments. Through them, Philoxenos violently attacks those monks and communities whose attitude remained irenic, who did not want to become involved in such quarrels and who

[8] *La lettera di Filosseno ai monaci di Tell Adda*, ed. GUIDI, p. 51.

[9] Ms. Vatican Syr. 136, fol. 52b-53a.

wished to continue living according to their vows of consecration. Here Philoxenos says that the monks who dress in sack cloth and are silent while the strife is going on deserves Gezi and will have a closed mouth on the last day as will they of the Legion[10]. Finally Philoxenos declares that the monk at the moment he is to enter the battle who, under the pretext of peaceful service, remains silent is a servant of Satan[11].

The impression which we receive from all these texts is this, that isolated and exceptional cases would hardly have so irritated the bishop of Mabbug or caused him to put so much weight on his arguments. Much more must have been involved. All the sources reflect a spirit of resistance and reluctance among considerable segments of monasticism, a spirit so strong that it irritated and irked the man under the pressures of combat and in need of auxiliary forces to sustain the front.

In such a situation it is understandable that the means used in the struggle were carefully weighed. In another letter, Philoxenos arranged his condemnations and anathemas in a way to influence monks to create groups of activists ready to step in when dogmatic truth was at stake[12]. Another letter of Philoxenos reflects the fact that there was a sentiment in his audience which revolted against the practice of attacking respected holy men who had ended their lives in veneration with anathemas. Monks felt that it was disgusting to anathematize «bones and ashes». In response, Philoxenos roundly declares that he has always anathematized heretics and does so with scruple, and further, that he expects them to overcome their sentiments and to follow his example. He assures them that nothing should restrain them from such condemnations. Not only must heretical doctrine and writings be anathematized, so too must persons, whether living or dead.

We possess later information attesting to this spirit of tenacity among the monks, the spirit to resist pressure to force them to abandon their reluctant attitude. Severos, the patriarch of Antioch, for example, was troubled by these forces in monasticism; in a letter sent by him to an abbot of the Monastery of Cyrus, we are informed of the existence of groups of monks who tried to keep fellowship with those whose views were not acceptable in Severos' eyes[13]. But not only were these monastic

[10] Ms. Sinai Syr. 10, fol. 49a.
[11] See page 172.
[12] *Three Letters of Philoxenos*, ed. VASCHALDE, p. 143f.
[13] *The Sixth Book of The Select Letters*, ed. BROOKS I, p. 38ff.

communities willing to allow men of other convictions to stay in their monasteries, they were even willing to share the eucharistic communion with these men—that can only mean that the abbot had, as well as the majority of his monastic community, closed an eye.

It must be borne in mind that we read about these things at the time of Philoxenos and Severos whereas the actual struggle had started much earlier; the cry to join in the battlefield had sounded decades before, and that fact is notable.

The same theme — the doctrinal quarrel — dominates all of the letters sent by bishops to the monasteries during these times. As many as are the materials which have come down to us, whether letters sent to the monks, abbots and monasteries, or circulars, they all give testimony to the tremendous pressure which was put on the monastic movement. To be sure, the interest in these documents also revolved around the subtle finesses employed in the distinction of the two natures in Christ. Yet, seldom do they offer anything but material which served only to deepen the disputes and to aggravate the conflict. The sublime things which had earlier filled these letters and circulars, e.g. the meaning of the ascetic life, devotion, the care of souls and the furtherance of the spiritual discipline, were rendered mute by the noise of controversy and strife. Almost everything we find in these letters is very flamable stuff, difficult to keep under proper control. Doubtful and sordid means all too easily found a place in such missives. Defamation and lies were utilized to discredit rivals and to stir up wrath and hatred. Thus Mār Jaʿqōb and Mār Theodor wrote to the monks in their dioceses depicting their rivals as polytheists, hoping that adversaries so compromised would more easily become the targets of the wrath of holy men, expecting monks to become so alert and vigilant that adherents of such crimes would find no place in the monasteries, nay, even more, that such persons would find no place to stay among the believers.

In the acts of the «Robber-Synod» at Ephesus in 449, there is a letter of a monk, Marqellos[14] and his fellow monks, which help us to reconstruct the happenings in Emesa. Here against Petros, ordained by the bishops of Phoenicia, Uranos rose up as the bishop of the opposition. Concerning his adversary, a Nestorian, he did not shrink from spreading calumny and slander to discredit him[15]. The situation then

[14] *Akten der Ephesinischen Synode*, ed. FLEMMING.
[15] Namely rumors that this man of corrupt character was really not an ordained shepherd but installed without prayer by Jews, pagans and clowns who had laid a gospel codex upon his head.

developed in such a way that clerics, lay people and monks of the monasteries, estimated as «very many», went over to the opposition. Thus was the ground prepared for all sorts of conflict.

As a result of the intense agitation, an atmosphere was created which changed the substance and activity of monastic life to such a degree that dogmatics became its main business. The interest of the monks was refocussed, centered upon the controversy on the relationship of the natures of Christ and related problems. These complicated questions gradually began to vex the men in the monasteries and the huts of the anchorites. The correspondence and letters of monks sometimes reveal how difficult it was for them; again and again they needed help and guidance when the problems involved clashed with unsurmountable obstacles of simple-mindedness.

The historical sources are unanimous in one respect—a substantial majority of the monasteries in Syria became strong supporters of the Monophysite movement. Further, monks constituted a special task force representing as they did the piety of the countryside. Their activities in the interest of regional loyalty developed into a steadily growing opposition movement to imperial ecclesiastical policy[16].

The Monophysite movement even began to make inroads into Persian territories. It seems that this, too, started through the monasteries. In the School of Edessa during the time of Hiba, bishop of Edessa, there were Persians who were not satisfied with the Nestorian sympathies, persons such as Philoxenos who later became bishop of Mabbūg, his brother Addai, Barḥadbešabbā of Qardū and Benjamin of Bēt Aramāyē. There must also have been other companions of similar theological conviction. Thus considerable forces must have been available to keep the Monophysite movement in progress.

That was the situation which faced Barṣaumā[17] in Nisibis. It looks as if the situation must have appeared alarming to him—judging from his actions in misusing the civil responsibilities given to him in connection with the western frontier of the Persian empire. Sources have preserved reports about his measures of suppressing the Monophysite movement, causing it much vexation and suffering. But the reports on widescale violence and actions of murder[18] as they appear also in Bar ʿEbrāyā[19] are certainly exaggerations.

[16] SOZOMENOS, *Historia eccl.* VI, XXVII.
[17] He had become bishop of Nisibis in 459. See GERO, *Barṣauma of Nisibis*.
[18] Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 178, fol. 13b.
[19] *Chronicon eccl.*, ed. ABBELOOS-LAMY II.

3. THE INTENSIFICATION OF THE STRUGGLES

Now we turn to the effects of the dogmatic controversies on monasticism. As a result of the fact that wide circles of often shy and helpless monks were ignited by the controversies, mundane instincts were awakened. The monks soon detected that purely spiritual weapons did not bring enough gain if the willingness to begin with deeds was missing, as in the case of the monks of the Monastery of Mār Bass. They now became energetic and wrote to their bishop, Jaʿqōb of Serūg, recommending on their part that the bishop should spice his letters more freely with condemnations and anathemas, as others had done[1].

All this made the monasteries and cells of anchorites the hearths of dogmatic agitation. The monastery which Severos of Antioch founded in the vicinity of Mayuma became immediately a hotbed of intensive Monophysite propaganda. Anchorites and monks left their cells and monasteries in order to attend meetings and conventions at which they engaged themselves actively in theology and dogmatic debates. Even the reclusi left their cells and the stylites their columns in order to discuss dogmatics. These meetings confirmed their conclusions on dogmatic disputes with lavishly phrased anathemas against their theological adversaries.

Such activities could not long remain academic. Disputes in word soon gave way to deeds which, in turn, poured oil on the flames of passion. Towards the end of the pontificate of Paulos, the Monastery of the Orientals in Edessa rejected his authority and ceased to appear in Edessa to receive the eucharist, as had been their practice. Instead, they began to consecrate the eucharist in the monastery. They also agreed on the demand to condemn the Chalcedonense and the letter of Pope Leo I and everyone venturing to confess that, after the incarnation, Christ had two natures. All monks subscribed to this proclamation as well as the anathema attached to it. A public announcement was posted at the gate of the monastery[2]. The same source adds that other Syrian monasteries imitated their action.

The preparation for battle also necessitated the readiness for physical strength and experience in brandishing a club. Isḥāq of Antioch[3], in his critique of the monastic movement, with a certain irony says that the

[1] *Jacobi Sarugensis epistulae*, ed. OLINDER, p. 62.
[2] *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, ed. BROOKS.
[3] See page 85ff.

abbots wanted to create and keep in their monasteries troops of strong monks. For this purpose, they selected novices as potential gladiators of combat. When recruiting men, they inspected their measurements, their faces and the strength of their muscles in order to test their fitness for physical wrestling. There is a report which describes how a chorepiscopus gathered the monks together from the monasteries and furnished them with clubs and other means for battle[4].

Just how much the fanaticism of monks could be fanned and ways of persuading them to engage in enterprises to arouse terror and to pressure one group against another, is shown in an episode of Aksenaya, a friend of Dioscoros. In his plan to compel the patriarch of Antioch, Flavianos, to denounce the creed of Chalcedon and to bring him to the point where he would condemn it along with the epistle of Leo, the most important role in the execution of the operation was given to the monks. He gathered a great number of monks from Syria, stirred them up with the contention that the right faith was in danger and led this troop to the palace of Flavianos in Antioch. This agitated mass, upon whom it was difficult to put strings of discipline, issued demands with much noise and uproar. The attitude of the patriarch about the way in which the petition was presented broke the last string of control over this heated crowd. The final act in the episode was tragic. The population of Antioch appeared on the scene, took up weapons and slew those who did not manage to flee in time. Before the curtain falls on the episode, we are permitted a glimpse at the cleansing of the battlefield in which the corpses of the victims are thrown into the Orontes[5].

Means of violence evoked means of counter-violence. Thus severe actions against the rebellious attitude of the monks took place. It is reported, for instance, that patriarch Flavianos expelled monks from a monastery which was located near Apamea[6]. Other similar actions against the monastic communities must have been undertaken.

Thus we have arrived at the actual state of war over the dogmatic formulas. The struggle devastated the life of monasticism, not only in this respect that the monks became involved in opposition to ecclesiastical politics, with all the consequences thereof, but also with respect to the fact that the body of the monastic movement was not spared division

[4] Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,734, fol. 156a.
[5] EVAGRIOS, *Historia eccl.*, III, 32, ed. MIGNE, col. 260-65.
[6] ZACHARIAS, *Vie de Sévère*, éd. KUGENER, p. 111.

in this struggle. The great majority of monks gathered around the champions of Monophysitism while a minority waivered about the role to be taken in these battles. The Monastery of Mār Maron long led the battle as the stronghold of the orthodox position.

The virus of division did its work thoroughly. Many monastic communities were divided over the rumpus, and the sources contain many gravamina to demonstrate this sad fact of history. In many communities, the explosive atmosphere made separation inevitable. One part of the monastic community would remain, the rest would form an exodus to seek a new place, naming the newly established after the old one as a legitimate continuation of a place of correct ascetic traditions. But this seldom solved the problem. Often enough, it was the beginning for even more violent quarrels, in the heat of which devotion in life and the fate of the monastery was neglected. It is reported that even such a great center as the Monastery of Mar Bass was crippled by strife and quarrels, falling into such disorder that it needed help from the church[7]. The monks felt that they had more important things to do than to cultivate their piety and Christian virtues. The struggles on behalf of the formulas became jealous. Very little time, even in the best of the cases, was left for spiritual and ascetic duties. All too quickly, monks learned how to use worldly means and learned that suspicions and lies were most effective in the battle. When the monks in the monasteries of Alexander Akoimetos decided to stay loyal to the Chalcedonian faith, they drew the wrath of the Monophysites down upon themselves. The Monophysites, among others, carried the tale that the monks were celebrating an annual festival of Nestorius. Terrifying stories about connections with demons and elicit cults, etc., were fabricated and circulated in order to discredit rivals. Such activities produced a sort of chain reaction. The adversaries of the Monophysites fabricated countermeasures.

Under such circumstances, the enmity went so far that it no longer observed any limit. The sources furnish us with some very realistic pictures. According to these, all the passions were let loose. Rude and rough natures acted freely according to their impulses, as we can see in the account in the «Lives of the Eastern Saints». The episode in connection with the monk, Sargīs, serves as an illustration. He appeared in church during the worship service, walked through the gathered congregations and punched his fist directly into the face of the preacher

[7] *The Sixth Book of the Select Letters*, ed. BROOKS.

who belonged to the rival confessional group[8]. Large groups of monks were gathered to use force and pressure against adversaries. The victims who had suffered pain, humiliation and blows at the hands of one party were honored and glorified by the other party as confessors.

Such wrath once let loose caused even greater excess. John of Ephesus, in his church history, has given us a graphic picture of the way in which these activities deformed the ethical face of monasticism. This source not only reports that monasteries were torn by discord, their normal life endangered or completely disrupted, but also that the disorder was so violent and the deeds so sinister that monks were brought before the law courts. The same source states that the monastic garb at this time became an object of mockery and scoffing on the part of the Christians, pagans and Jews, when monks «with beards almost reaching to the ground», chained with an iron ring around the neck, were brought into court as defendants on charges of murder[9].

All these adventures, which, indeed, could fill a *chronique scandaleuse*, depict monks as rough and brutal. The stories which were told in Syria and Mesopotamia and laid down in the romance of Julian, depict monks in cruel colors, skilled in using the club for punishment, as people who no longer abhorred the doing of merciless deeds[10].

These activities of the monks excited a further step, the advance into ecclesiastical affairs for the purpose of taking over administrative posts. Among many other places, the happenings in Antioch are very significant. In the year 463, there arrived a monk named Peter the Fuller in Antioch. As was true of most of the monks of this time, he clung to Monophysite convictions. His efforts to discredit Bishop Martyrios, accusing him of Nestorianism, were crowned with success. Martyrios was expelled, as were two others who were elected his successors. Instead, Peter himself became bishop upon election by the Monophysite groups. This was a major event in the entire process, one which brought the churches increasingly under the control of the Monophysites.

4. The First Phase of Persecutions

Since deeper insight has been gained into the growing strife in the monastic communities after the outbreak of dogmatic struggles, it is time

[8] *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, ed. Brooks.
[9] *Johannes Ephesimi historia eccl.*, ed. Brooks.
[10] *Julianus der Abtrünnige: Syrische Erzählungen*, ed. Hoffmann.

to move on to a treatment of the main events, the events which turned all these conflicts into new turmoil and storms. Since monastic movements constituted the main force on the scene, movements in which peaceful developments were promising, for which good premises were developing internally with all kinds of spiritual stimuli and impulses, as well as external horizons for expanding the monastic movement, it was a cataclysmic tragedy when all that was suddenly interrupted by events which, having been superheated far too long, finally exploded. These destructive events shook monasticism to its roots, upsetting not only its life but also presenting new, yet painful, challenges actively to build up the new church, the Monophysite church.

Ominously, dark clouds came up suddenly and broke out like lightning with the enthronement of Emperor Justin. This fatal event took place at a synod which was convened in July 518 A. D., and at which the fateful decision to condemn Patriarch Severos was taken[1]. Other synod meetings quickly convened at Jerusalem and Tyros to follow suit and to adopt the same decision[2]. These ominously dark clouds on the horizon converged to reign destruction upon the Monophysites. Severos[3] was deposed and the patriarchal seat given to Paul. Save for a hasty escape[4] to Egypt, Severos would have lost his life.

Yet, these events constitute no more than a prelude to frightening actions. The state decided to intervene. It chose to use its power, to pursue the way of violence. During the following year, a large wave of persecutions swept through the entire patriarchate of Antioch. Diocese after diocese was screened and robbed of its bishop[5]. The spiritual leaders were deported or imprisoned. The violence constantly escalated.

[1] *Acta conciliorum oecum.*, ed. Schwartz III, p. 76f.
[2] *Ibid.*, III, p. 77ff.
[3] About a new discovery on Severus, see Vööbus, «Découverte d'un *mēmrā* de Gīwargī, évêque des arabes», p. 433ff. About the discovery of another new source of Severos see Vööbus, «Ein Panegyrikus von Severos von Antiochien von Qyriaqos».
[4] About the discovery of a new important source, namely an unknown letter of Severus, see Vööbus, «Découverte d'une lettre de Sévère d'Antioche», p. 295ff. Among his letters this new document is of extraordinary character since it is autobiographical and gives a detailed account of his escape.
[5] According to a report, more than 40 bishops were expelled from their seats, *Chronicon anonynum ad. A. D. 846 pertinens*, ed. Brooks, p. 225ff. Among the bishops of the Monophysite church who were expelled in the year 518, there is one who attracts our special attention because of the way he is introduced. He is described as: «Jōḥannān, bishop of the Ṭayyāyē, called Zīzāyē of Ḥawwārīn who died in exile», Michael Syrus, *Chronique* IX, 13, éd. Chabot IV. This Jōḥannān must have been bishop of the Christian Arabs, operating as a shepherd of a parembole community extending over a wide area between Damascus and Palmyra.

A few years later, either 521[6] or 525[7], the tide of persecution welled up again. Thus did the catastrophe steadily extend its tentacles. This time the devastating blows were sent out in a new direction. Frightening by violent actions engulfed the monks. The sources unfold scene after scene of ruthlessness and savagery. A raging fury blew through the places of stillness and peace, driving the monks from their monasteries. the measures were so cruel that there were those who were so overcome by the ferocity of these attacks that they lost their courage and, in their despair, switched to the Chalcedonian party.

In connection with these sufferings another aspect must be mentioned here. The monks who had been expelled from their monasteries, cells and huts in Euphratesia, Osrhoene, Mesopotamia as well as the region of Antioch, gave a new impulse of incalculable effect in missions among the country people and among the Arabs. One segment of these ascetics preferred to move in groups into desert areas. Their appearance in these regions resulted in a dissemination of stories about their courage and faith among the country people even including the semi-nomad settlements. An account given by Zacharias Rhetor is of special interest in this connection. On the missionary spirit which radiated from them he writes as follows: «Four or five communities of anchorites also settled in the desert ... and so the desert was at peace, ans was abundantly supplied with a population of believers who lived in it, and fresh ones everyday were added to them which aided in swelling the numbers of their brothers out of Christian love, and others again because they were being driven from country to country by bishops in the cities»[8].

It is reported that the persecutions cast the Monophysite monks out of their residences with the result that they were compelled to leave the Byzantine territory.

In the East great success was gained for Monophysite monasticism. Here in the mountain region of Izlā between Mardin and Nisibis in the south and Ğezirat ibn Umar in the east could establish its leading monastic center which developed quickly into a place of pilgrimage —

[6] *Chronicon anonymum Ps. Dionysianum vulgo dictum*, ed. CHABOT, p. 27.

[7] ZACHARIAS RHETOR, *Historia eccl.*, II, ed. BROOKS, p. 82.

[8] ... ܒܡܠܬܐ ܕܝܢ ܗܕܐ. ܐܦ ܒܡܕܒܪܐ ܐܪ̈ܒܥܐ ܚܡܫܐ ܟܢ̈ܘܫܐ ܕܐܢܫ̈ܝܢ ܐܬܝܬܒܘ ܘܗܘܬ ܫܝܢܐ ܗܘܬ ܡܕܒܪܐ. ܘܡܬܥܬܪܐ ܗܘܬ ܒܡܫܘܬܐ ܕܡܗܝܡܢܐ ܕܥܡܪܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܒܗ. ܘܐܚܪ̈ܢܐ ܕܝܘܡ ܡܢ ܝܘܡ ܗܘܘ ܡܬܬܘܣܦܝܢ ܥܠܝܗܘܢ ܕܡܣܓܝܢ ܡܢܝܢܐ ܕܐܚ̈ܝܗܘܢ ܒܚܘܒܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܝܘܬܐ. ܘܐܚܪ̈ܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܒܪ ܡܢ ܐܬܪ ܠܐܬܪ ܡܛܪܕܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܡܢ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܒܡܕܝܢ̈ܬܐ, *Historia eccl.* II, p. 81, 7-8, 23-27.

namely Ṭūr ʿAbdīn. Here monasticism became almost entirely Monophysitic. This became a very important spiritual center of the Monophysite faith. Nestorian monasticism which at first played a role here, as that of Mār Augēn, went gradually in the stream of the general development of this region into the hands of the Monophysites.

One wing of these monastic communities went to the area of Ḥīra. There they were confronted by new hardships. Catholicos Šīlā felt that it was now his turn to harass them by putting them before the choice, either to accept his Nestorian doctrines or to be thrown out of Ḥīra. Since the monks remained adamantly faithful to their belief, they had no alternative but to leave Ḥīra and move to Nağrān.

In this inferno, the whole life of the communities was upset, and soon the inevitable consequence occurred, namely, an acute shortage of clergy which became a life and death issue for virtually every Monophysite community. John of Ephesus has furnished us with ample evidence to illumine the tragedy of this period. His works paint a very sad picture of this tragic situation, basing his reports on that of a man who himself had been ordained by the same Jōḥannān of Tellā. The situation was desperate. The terrified bishops hung on the horns of a dilemma. On the one hand, they had become frightened of ordaining new priests[9], but on the other hand, the congregations bombarded them with requests and desperate pleas for clergy. At conclaves of the bishops, one and all refused to ordain for fear of repercussions, if not also of reprisal. At this fatal juncture, Jōḥannān of Tellā[10] volunteered to take the risk, with the proviso that his colleagues and the patriarch authorized him «to ordain all expelled men»[11].

The superhuman efforts of this man who had been captivated by anchorite ideals and desires, and who now plunged into an ocean of limitless activity, have been extolled in a monument erected by John of Ephesus and also by his disciple, ʾEliyā[12]. That which Jōḥannān of Tellā undertook was nothing less than the formation of a clandestine

[9] That they consecrated some of them secretly was of very little help in view of the catastrophic situation, *ibid.*, p. 515f. *Histoire nestorienne*, éd. SCHER VII, p. 142ff.

[10] Regarding Jōḥannān of Tellā, see also the discovery of an unknown biography composed of Jaʿqōb of Serūg, VÖÖBUS, *Handschriftliche Überlieferung der Mēmrē-Dichtung des Jaʿqōb I*, p. 5ff. He was expelled from his episcopal see in the year 521, ʾELIYA, *Vita Johannis episcopi Tellae*, ed. BROOKS, p. 80ff. After his expulsion, he resided for some time in the Monastery of Zakkai, near Qalliniqos.

[11] *Lives of the Eastern Saints* II, p. 516ff.

[12] *Vita Johannis episcopi Tellae*, p. 1ff.

apostolate. He must have been a man of extraordinary stamina to brave the immense task which he now faced. His apostolate meant to restore life in a huge territory. It took him on a marathon run from the Persian frontiers to Armenia, Cappadocia and Phoenicia[13] to try to soothe the deep wounds in the life of the Monophysite communities. He was tireless in encouraging, inspiring, instructing, examining candidates and then performing mass ordinations. His candidates, for the most part, came from the monasteries and the cells of the solitaries. Throughout all of these efforts, his energy seemed to be inexhaustible. In his person, he became a symbol of renewal. Such heroic efforts soon began to bear fruit. As a result, depressed communities felt a quickening spirit. This is demonstrated as well by a telling symptom: growing numbers of turncoats sought him out in order to be pardoned and to be received once more into the Monophysite fold[14]. Candidates of ordination came to him «like a flood that is produced in a river by thick clouds»[15] whenever he appeared — in monasteries, on the road, even in the desert. Thus his risky labors enabled the communities and villages to be provided with deacons and priests. The records he is reported to have kept are said to have contained thousands of names of ordained persons[16]. In addition, the epic efforts of this shepherd instilled courage, hardened determination, and fanned the flames of the spirit of resistance. His personal example, no doubt, proved invaluable in establishing the essential premises for the renewal of life in the congregations under the most severe conditions.

The hurricane force of the persecutions sought to eradicate Monophysitism forever. However, it failed to win the day — it brought opposite, latent powers to the fore. The Monophysitic strength in the Syrian Orient successfully withstood this first merciless test — an experience that gave it the muscle and iron to face the excruciating trails yet to come.

In 527, the imperial throne fell to Justinian who thus came to the helm to the ship of state. At first, things took a different turn. This shift eased the noise and fury, and monks quietly began to return to their monasteries[17]. The communities which had been severely tried and

[13] *Lives of the Eastern Saints* II, p. 519.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 519f.
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 518.
[16] The Oriental lightheartedness in dealing with figures and numbers is shown by the figure given — 170,000, *ibid.*, p. 522.
[17] MICHAEL SYRUS, *Chronique*, éd. CHABOT, p. 270.

tested, even though pressure was still applied, felt a surging of emotion of relief. In this new situation, Jōḥannān of Tellā could prosecute his work more openly and boldly, carrying out mass ordinations[18]. A graphic view of the situation, in the year 529, is afforded us by one who himself experienced examination and preparation in a nightly gathering, together with a contingent of monks, under the hands of Jōḥannān of Tellā[19]. The vigor with which he fulfilled this program, however, brought down upon him the wrath of the authorities and left him in a very precarious position[20].

Nonetheless, much more was attained during this period, as these reports show. Increasing attention could now be given to the revival of ecclesiastical life. The breach between the church bodies widened to include areas beyond those of doctrine alone. The foundation was laid even for an indigenous canon law designed to regulate ecclesiastical practice in the communities, as well as piety, worship, liturgy and church order. The Monophysite tradition began to take on definite form.

Valuable glimpses are allowed us when we examine the canons issued by Jōḥannān of Tellā. The search for new manuscript sources in the churches and monasteries of the Syrian Orient has led us to the oldest and most valuable evidence of these documents[21]. They aim at a complete separation of the Monophysite believers from their opponents and affirm their readiness to suffer unto death for the sake of their creed[22]. The position and lot of the clergy is also dealt with, especially with respect to its qualifications and further training — certainly a not unnatural consequence of the mass ordinations[23]. These legislative sources cast a singular light upon another facet of this endeavors: the institution of deaconesses and their role in the organism of church life. Newly discovered sources exhibit the attention given by him to the nurture and strengthening of organized monasticism[24]. These years saw not only the growth in the number of Monophysites, but also a

[18] 'ELIYA, *Vita Johannis episcopi Tellae*, p. 23ff.
[19] This company of about 70 monks came from the monasteries of Amid and its surroundings, *Lives of the Eastern Saints* II, p. 521.
[20] *Ibid.*, p. 520.
[21] VÖÖBUS, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen* I, 1,A, p. 156ff.; I, 1,B, p. 263ff.
[22] See Can. 1, *ibid.*, I, 1,A, p. 158.
[23] It was necessary to curb the improvisations and the wild and the exotic in ecclesiastical practice and to specify the qualifications of monks to make them eligible for the priesthood; see Can. 11, *Syriac and Arabic Documents*, ed. VÖÖBUS, p. 58.
[24] VÖÖBUS, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen* I, 1,A, p. 156ff.; I, 1,B, p. 267.

consolidation in the life of the church, due in great part to this tireless man. An atmosphere was created in which, for the first time, not only did two separate churches consisting of the clergy and communities, but also two traditions, came into existence, facing one another.

This process of consolidation continued, regardless of new rapprochments by Emperor Justinian. During the summer of 531, he issued an order permitting the exiled monks to return[25]. Moreover, near the end of the year, a half-dozen bishops, also in exile, were even given a royal invitation to present themselves at Constantinople[26]. They were understandably very surprised at the turn of events[27]. What was more surprising, however, was the fact that in Constantinople the shepherds were even allowed to submit a confession[28] to the Emperor[29].

Another source of understanding and assurance appeared from the Empress Theodora. Her disposition towards the Monophysites was positive as it was precious. This was manifestly demonstrated to all. She turned the Hormisda Palace over to oriental monks and ascetics — to that company of men whose panoply of very peculiar Syrian ascetic customs and practices seemed so strange — to do with as they wished[30]. The whole undertaking became a spectacle. The palace was converted into a huge monastic camp. A more conspicuous platform for the anti-Chalcedonian forces could hardly have been provided. All this created a new atmosphere. It was this locus which provided the setting for a theological conference[31] with representatives of both parties in attendance[32]. The exact date is not known but it must have taken place either in the year 532[33] or in the year 531/33[34]. Still more — the Monophysites

[25] ZACHARIAS RHETOR, *Historia eccl.*, II, 6,2, p. 82.

[26] These bishops were able to stay in the capital for more than a year.

[27] This is shown by their first reaction since at first they did not go to Constantinople; they wrote to the emperor and from him they received a new invitation.

[28] This document is preserved in ZACHARIAS RHETOR, *Historia eccl.*, I, 15, p. 115ff.

[29] This confession presented to the emperor *inter alia* rejects Eutyches on the one hand and the position of the council of Chalcedon on the other.

[30] Even cells were arranged in the palace to satisfy the needs of the reclusi, *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, II, p. 676ff.

[31] INNOCENTIUS DE MARONIA, *Epistola de collatione cum Severianis habita*, in: *Acta conciliorum oecum.*, ed. SCHWARTZ IV, 2, p. 169ff.

[32] Discussions were arranged so that both parties were represented by a six-man delegation; the Monophysites were represented by Sargīs of Ḥarrăn, Thomas of Germanicia, Philoxenos of Doliche, Petros of Theodosiopolis, Jōḥannān of Tellā and Nonnos of Circesion.

[33] See STEIN, *Histoire du Bas-Empire* II, p. 278ff.

[34] *Acta conciliorum oecum.*, ed. SCHWARTZ, IV, 2, p. XXVI.

were allowed to disseminate their propaganda in the capital[35] in complete freedom[36]. Such an atmosphere was hightened all the more with the appointment of the new patriarch Anthimos[37]. This was certainly a very bold move, rather astonishing under the circumstances. On top of all these events, Patriarch Severos was also invited to come to Constantinople. Here he was respectfully[38] received and showered with great honor, and he was also allowed to promote his theological cause[39].

Did the Monophysites succumb to new hope in view of the emperor's new role despite his known vacillation in ecclesiastical policy? Did they become so complacent about their activities that they dropped their guard?

Certainly Justinian's move drew Jōḥannān of Tellā away from his activities since he, too, had been invited to Constantinople. But it is highly improbable that the leaders, who had been tested and tried, cherished any illusions about the new imperial policy. The reasons were very obvious. The Byzantine clergy and monks in Constantinople remained adamantly opposed to the new trend in the emperor's policy. This the Monophysite spiritual leaders followed intently. Also, the formulation of an assault detachment of Byzantine monks, their agitation[40], manoeuvers and intrigues[41], were well known facts to them. Further, the web of intrigue had drawn Syria[42] into the controversy as the documents themselves prove[43]. Nor should it go unnoticed that the mastermind of the intrigue, namely the pope, was in contact with circles in Syria. The symptoms of a tour de force to come were perceptible. Thus Severos, who was in Constantinople and remained there for a year, told his friends with resignation: «Do not err, under this emperor the peace of

[35] *Lives of the Eastern Saints* XVII, p. 18ff.; see *Acta conciliorum oecum.*, III, p. 139, 148, 181.

[36] In the year 553, they utilized the panic caused by an earthquake in order to stage a mass demonstration against Chalcedonians, *Chronicon paschale*, ed. DINDORF, p. 629.

[37] The new patriarch was consecrated in June 535.

[38] This took place in the year 535.

[39] Severos was able to promote the cause of Monophysitism for one year. He also was able to influence the newly appointed patriarch, Anthimos.

[40] The man who organized the band of monks and who directed the agitation on a large scale was perhaps Menas whose merits earned the patriarchal seat. This has been suggested by SCHWARTZ.

[41] Monks in Constantinople used as an assault detachment, sent a delegation to Rome, *Acta concilorium oecum.* ed. SCHWARTZ, III, p. 141.

[42] These actions took place particularly in Palestine and Syria II.

[43] ZACHARIAS RHETOR, *Historia eccl.*, 9,19, p. 135ff.

the church is impossible»[44]. The predictions of Jōḥannān of Tellā may also be mentioned in this connection. In the year 529, when John of Ephesus, along with a large contingent of monks received ordination from Jōḥannān of Tellā, the latter's admonition was indelibly pressed upon the memory of those participating in the act of consecration: «Pray and cease not, for a time is coming when the men to give the hand of ordination to believers shall be wanting and shall not be found»[45]. Thus, no illusions were entertained that the outlook was less than bleak.

5. The Second Phase of Persecutions

Indeed, that which men like Severos and Jōḥannān of Tellā anticipated came about more quickly than expected. The scene suddenly changed when new characters appeared on the stage. The intrigues intensified to a feverish pitch when Pope Agapetus personally took matters into his expert hands. After arriving in Constantinople in 536, he assumed the role of prosecutor, intervening in Byzantine ecclesiastical matters at will. Justinian complied with the wishes of Agapetus in every respect[1]. Indeed, even to such a point that the throne itself suffered humiliation[2].

The pope's strategy was executed with lightning speed. Anthimos, patriarch of Constantinople, was deposed and Menas appointed his successor, consecrated by the pope[3]. The submission of a confession, Chalcedonian in theology, was required[4]. A synod which accelerated the turn of events was swiftly convened[5]. Monophysite leaders were anathematized[6]. Severos was arrested and thrown into prison[7]. The imperial

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 136ff.

[45] *Lives of the Eastern Saints* II, p. 521. See also a letter written about 530 in Draguet, «Une pastorale anti-julianiste», p. 83ff. This addition rests on Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,663 which unfortunately has preserved only the first part of this interesting document. A tireless search for new manuscript sources has recovered the only complete text preserved in Ms. Mardin Orth. 350, see Vööbus, «Entdeckung neuer Handschriften des anti-julianischen Pastoralschreibens», p. 114ff.

[1] Whether Justinian, indeed, saw in the pope a help against Theodora, Schwartz, *Zur Kirchenpolitik Justinians*, p. 44f., cannot be discussed here.

[2] According to the official account given by the Roman curia, *Gesta pontificorum Romanorum*, ed. Mommsen, p. 142, the orthodox pope conquered the tyrannical heretic Justinian. This, of course, is a distortion; there was no resistance at all against the pope.

[3] The consecration by the pope on March 13, 536, was itself an unheard of event.

[4] *Epistolae imperatorum, pontificum, aliorum*, ed. Günther, p. 338ff.

[5] From May 2 to June 4, 536.

[6] *Acta conciliorum oecum.*, ed. Schwartz III, p. 26ff.

[7] His arrest was regardless of the assurance of guarantee given to him. However, Theodora salvaged him from the worst and helped his escape.

decree sanctioning the decisions of the synod followed upon the heels of these actions[8]. The Monophysites were banished from the capital. Other drastic actions followed suit — works of Severos were consigned to destruction[9] and cruel punishment was established for everyone who had the courage to copy Monophysite writings[10].

A new vector in the zigzag course of Justinian's ecclesiastical policy now occurred. The turn of events brought a return to violence. In consequence, a new persecution swept through the patriarchate of Antioch. This persecution by far exceeded the previous one in cruelty and severity. Patriarch Ephraem[11] took these cruel actions into his own hands and carried them out, covering the entire territory[12]. This took place during the winter of 536/7[13]. This prelate was accompanied by a detachment of soldiers[14] in order to ensure the submission of the rebellious Monophysites and to break their spirit[15].

This persecution was carried out with a savage fury, feeding upon inhuman cruelty, coupled with the power of arrest, imprisonment and expulsion[16]. The impact of the ferocity was so fierce that many broke under the pressure[17]. Particularly the monks — deprived of house and home — once again became wanderers. The blows became more and more cruel. Even nature itself, an extraordinarily cold winter, seemed to support the patriarch in his work of destruction[18]. Most of the shepherds, if not all, fell victim. Further, opportunities to provide the suffering church with new shepherds became very limited. Two years later, Jōḥannān of Tellā, having returned from Constantinople, was able to ordain new shepherds only in Persia[19] — nowhere else! The hunt for him was concentrated in the mountains of Šiggar[20]. Things moved

[8] On August 6, 536.

[9] *Novella* XXXXII, issued on August 6, 536.

[10] For this crime, his hand had to be chopped off.

[11] Concerning this man, see Lebon, «Éphrem d'Amid, patriarche d'Antioche», p. 365ff.

[12] Namely Aleppo, Qennešrīn, Mabbūg, Serūg, Edessa, Šurā, Qalliniqos and the rest of the frontier area, Reš'ainā, Amid and Tellā.

[13] Zacharias Rhetor, *Historia eccl.* 10, 1, ed. Brooks, p. 175.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 174ff. See a moving account of the horrors and endless vexations of the monasteries of Amid in *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, p. 607ff.

[15] Some were burned alive, *ibid.*, p. 524.

[16] About Presbyter Qūrā of Amid, see Zacharias Rhetor, *Historia eccl.* 10,3, p. 173.

[17] *Ibid.*, 10, 1, p. 174ff.

[18] The extraordinarily cold winter multiplied the agony of the calamities and many died, *ibid.*, p. 174f.

[19] 'Eliya, *Vita Johannis episcopi Tellae*, p. 58ff.

[20] Jōḥannān was detected by some functionaries with the aid of a «strangulator of the robbers». Johannes Malalas, *Chronographia*, ed. Dindorf, p. 382.

rapidly towards still greater catastrophes. This courageous shepherd was finally captured, imprisoned and killed[21]. Monophysitism had entered upon its most critical phase.

That the consequences were of the utmost gravity to the sufferers was clear. A process of strangulation was in effect. Again, overnight the problem of the shortage of the clergy became extremely important. The situation suddenly experienced an utterly critical tremor, presenting as it did the end of all that had been built up at such enormous cost and effort. The moment had arrived, the moment which had haunted the spiritual leaders — the flock in the Syrian Orient was without any shepherds. Philoxenos of Mabbūg, Tūmā of Maraš, Tūmā of Damascus, Tūmā of Dārā, Petros of Reš'ainā, Jōḥannān of Tellā and others were dead. Patriarch Anthimos, Patriarch Theodosios of Alexandria, Peter of Apamea, and Jōḥannān of Hephaistou were kept in confinement at the fortress. On top of all that, Patriarch Severos breathed his last in the year 538.

After the death of Patriarch Severos of Antioch, the ancient patriarch of Alexandria, Theodosios was the incontestable spiritual leader of the Monophysite community. However, Theodosius and three hundred members of his clergy were imprisoned in the fortress of Terkos, not far from Constantinople, for many years[22]. Theodora was able to give to the old patriarch a place of refuge. He enjoyed the favor of Theodora to the end of his life, on June 19, 566, after having lived nearly thirty years in exile in Constantinople[23].

The situation was desperate beyond belief. Only very little could be done to achieve some relief in this process of strangulation. Jōḥannān of Hephaistou, a Syrian[24], decided to do something about it. By a ruse[25], he managed to slip out of internment at Constantinople. He made secret trips to accomplish his work, to confirm and strengthen the besieged community and to provide the flock with shepherds. Various clandestine journeys took him to Asia Minor as far as Tarsus, Silicia, Cyprus and

[21] Jōḥannān was dragged off to Antioch where he spent the remainder of his life in imprisonment; there he died on February 6, 538.

[22] *Lives of the Eastern Saints* XVII, 35, XVIII, p. 528.

[23] *Incerti auctoris chronicon Ps. Dionysianum vulgo dictum*, ed. CHABOT II, p. 142.

[24] About him see VÖÖBUS, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen* I, 1,A, p. 178ff.

[25] Under the pretext of illness, Jōḥannān obtained permission from Theodora to live separately in a villa. He used this opportunity and from the place he slipped out on his secret mission; *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, p. 530ff.

Rhodes[26]. Naturally, assistance to the congregations in the oriental communities was very limited despite such extraordinary efforts. It is certain that some persons from these communities traveled great distances at enormous risk in order to receive ordination. For the oriental provinces, the only avenue availabe to them was to be found in Persia. But in that territory, only one bishop, Qyros, was left[27]. He carried out ordinations during the period 537/8-544/5 at which time, regrettably, the frontier was closed because of the war[28].

6. The Rescue

Just when darkness and despair were at their deepest, there occurred an event which was entirely unpredictable — the genesis of the Monophysite Church is rich in such dramatic moments. Al-Ḥārit bar Gabala, king of the Arabs, himself a Monophysite Christian, like the greater part of his tribe, whom patriarch Ephraem of Antioch had in vain tried to convert to orthodoxy[1], suddenly appeared in Constantinople in the year 542/3. He was determined to create a closely knit Monophysite realm in his kingdom and he demanded two or three bishops for Syria from Theodora. The empress complied. This brought salvation at the very brink of the chasm. Two monks stepped forward to salvage the catastrophic situation. It must rank as one of the most decisive events in the history of the period when Patriarch Theodosios intoned the ceremony of the episcopal consecration of the two monks who were in Constantinople at that time: Ja'qōb Būrde'ānā and Theodoros.

The history of the rescue of the Syrian Monophysite church is connected with the monk called Ja'qōb Būrde'ānā who has become an immortal personality. In fact, this monastic figure has secured a lasting place in the annals of the history of his church.

Ja'qōb[2] was born around the year 500 at the village of Gamāwā, north of Tellā, and entered monasticism in the Monastery of Phesīltā (i.e. the

[26] The third such journey probably took place in the year 541. He also used literary means to strengthen his mission. From Cyprus, he sent a letter with the canons to the Syrian abbots in the Orient, see VÖÖBUS, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen* I, 1,A, p. 175ff.

[27] MICHAEL SYRUS, *Chronique*, p. 309.

[28] *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, p. 522.

[1] MICHAEL SYRUS, *Chronique* II, p. 246ff.

[2] He was son of Theophilos, a priest in Tellā, *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, p. 353ff., p. 228.

Quarry)[3]. His education was carried out in various places[4]. Of course, the sources for the life of such a personality are full of apocryphal details; however, they do not overshadow the historical particulars of his life and work.

Since Jaʿqōb was a man of education[5], versed in theological and scriptural knowledge, he was able to prosecute his mission very effectively in the defence of his doctrines and faith; he spoke Syriac, Greek and Arabic with equal fluency.

Jaʿqōb was a humble monk[6] who remained loyal to his vows of monastic poverty, rigor and asceticism. He was widely known for his conspicuous garment and who was called Burdeʿana[7] from wearing a horse or saddle cloth or patchwork garment or rags as his garment, signalizing his devotion to personal poverty. That fame, which spun a halo around his life, occurred despite his wishes and against his will.

In the course of this journeying, he came to Constantinople with another Syrian monk by the name of Sargīs, whom he, by the way, did not forget when the time came to consecrate the first prelate for the patriarchal see of Antioch[8].

The second was Theodoros, who was an Arab by birth and also a monk[9]. Theodoros became bishop of the Arabs whose settlements consisted of tents. The assertion in the unhistorical vita[10] about him, that his seat was located in Boṣra[11] is a mistake. In truth, it was the *ḥirtā*[12] as John of Ephesus correctly remarks[13]. Thus, Theodoros

[3] It is very fortunate that unknown sources have enriched the the literary traditions regarding Barṣaumā: Ms. Damascus Patr. 12/18, fol. 445ff.; Ms. Mardin Orth. 267, p. 95-107; Ms. Mardin Orth. 275, fol. 134b-155a; Ms. Mardin Orth. 276, p. 27-39; Ms. Mosul Orth., copied from a manuscript in the village of Arbū in Ṭūr ʿAbdīn, has no signature; the vita appears on fol. 47-60a; Ms. Qarṭāmīn, bound in red cloth, has no signature; its measurements are: 24,4 × 17cm; the vita appears in the corpus as nr. 3. About the discovery of new manuscript sources on Jaʿōb, see VÖÖBUS, «Neue handschriftliche Funde über die Biographie des Jaʿqōb», p. 37ff.

[4] After a solid education, he entered a monastery on Mount Izlā.

[5] *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, p. 690.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 690f.

[7] ܒܘܪܕܥܢܐ.

[8] See page 223f.

[9] *Lives of the Eastern Saints.*

[10] *Commentarii de beatis Orientalibus*, ed. VAN DOUWEN-LAND, p. 206.

[11] By the way, it is interesting to note that the followers of Julian of Halicarnassus later on exactly followed the same pattern in consecrating bishop for Edessa and Boṣra. DRAGUET, «L'ordination frauduleuse des Julianistes», p. 78.

[12] ܚܝܪܬܐ, *ḥīra* of the Arabs, thus meaning the main camp of the tribe.

[13] *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, p. 693.

served in the diaspora as a travelling bishop. An immense territory came under his jurisdiction — the entire desert, Arabia and Palestine, up to Jerusalem[14] — an area which had become a place of refuge for the hunted. His labors led to fruitful work.

Bishop Theodoros became bishop of the parembole, i.e. encampments. Theodoros under the circumstances in the realm of Ḥārith could only operate among the Arab tribes and clans under circuit commissions. The silhouette of his bishopric is extraordinary in character. Besides tents, there were buildings and enclosures, fortified compounds and fortified bloc-houses scattered about at various places more or less numerous in strength. At the heart of such encampment settlements was Jābiya in Jawlān. The importance of this center was enhanced[15] by the fact that it also included a sanctuary erected to the cult of Sargīs[16]. Another rather important center was located in the vicinity of Dumair, located northeast of Damascus, known earlier as a Roman military fortification. It is marked by archaeological remains of which a corner tower has survived[17]. Also Jillīq must be mentioned — it was located in the Ghawṭa, a region around Damascus. In the vicinity of this strong point there was located the Monastery of ʿUqabta[18], situated south of Damascus. Under the favors of al-Ḥārith, in addition to the restoration of ecclesiastical life, numerous monasteries were founded and the existing ones brought to new floration.

The same lively ecclesiastical activity was fostered also by Mundhir, the son of Ḥārith. He was too eager to build churches and monasteries. One of his sanctuaries comes to the fore in connection with a list of subscriptions given by the abbots of the monasteries located in the province Arabia. Here it is recorded that the man who wrote on behalf of Abbot Sargīs, of the Monastery of ʿUqabta, was his deputy a priest Eustathios who is characterized in the following way: «Who is priest of the church of the friend of Christ, the illustrious Patricius Mundhir»[19].

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 693.

[15] See page 236.

[16] DUSSAUD-MACLER, *Rapport sur une mission dans les régions désertiques de la Syrie*, p. 48.

[17] WADDINGTON, *Inscriptions grecques*, nr. 2562; cf. DUSSAUD, *Topographie historique de la Syrie*, p. 300f.

[18] Cf. NAU, *Les Arabes chrétiens*, p. 62.

[19] *Documenta ad origines monoph.*, subscription nr. 121.

7. Revivification of the Communities

The advent of these two spiritual leaders in monastic garb did not mean reprieve but rescue. They were aware of the tremendous burden laid upon them and their mission. As it turned out, a new leaf in the book of Monophysite history had been turned.

The real career of Jaʿqōb began after his ordination into the episcopacy when he was smuggled out of the Byzantine capital and entered upon the immense task of rebuilding his church. His efforts in that regard have become legendary.

Jaʿqōb became bishop of Edessa with jurisdiction over Syria and the regions to the west. Thus, his territory included all the areas beyond the diocese of Theodoros, extending from the Persian borders to Constantinople[1]. Jaʿqōb undertook the enormous task of spiritual leadership within his enormous jurisdictional domain[2] and gave it all he had. A moving, vivid account of his heroic endeavors to encourage, comfort, strengthen and nurture the life of the communities under his care is given in the colorful pictures preserved in John of Ephesus[3]. Constantly harassed by pursuers, he moved from village to village. It is stated in these texts that «he would complete all the work of this ministry in one night and perhaps one day, and would pass the next night thirty or forty miles or more farther on»[4]. The number of ordinations[5] he performed in this necessarily clandestine fashion is reported in fantastic figures[6]. Unfortunately, solid documentation for the study of this period is studded with lacunae. The picture Jōḥannān gives is spectroscopic, yet not adequate; his moving panegyric does not include substantial data so essential for the historian. Some information can be culled from the sources about the tradition and habits which continued to live on in ecclesiastical practice, as is seen, in particular, in the canonical literature produced by Jaʿqōb of Edessa[7]. Newly discovered documents have unearthed important unknown material[8] which

[1] *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, p. 153f.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 154.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 623.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 623.
[5] About the bishops whom he consecrated see HONIGMANN, *Évêques et évêchés monophysites d'Asie*, p. 178ff.
[6] Jōḥannān of Ephesus believes that 100,000 is not too high a figure for the number of his ordinations, *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, p. 696f.
[7] VÖÖBUS, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen* I, 1,A, p. 203ff.; I, 1,B, p. 273ff.
[8] *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition I*, ed. VÖÖBUS, p. 233ff.

increases our knowledge[9]. These documents show us how difficult it was even at a later time to wean the monks from certain ritual and liturgical practices and from exercising priestly functions. They reflect the role which the contingent of monks once had played, that is, during the most critical period under discussion. Among these resolutions, there is one that tells us something about the travelling priest on the way to serve the scattered flock — a real *conversatio viatorum*: it describes, in striking fashion, how a deacon could serve as an altar for the celebration of the eucharist. What a portrait of ecclesiastical life under emergency conditions, of the cultic life geared to meet the demands of being on the move in secrecy and in haste!

Since, in everything that took place, we have to do with very important historical events, some additional comments are inevitable.

Jaʿqōb was not granted the time to stay in one place and to occupy an episcopal residence. He was constantly on the move, tirelessly journeying, moving from one country to another. He is reported to have traversed Syria, Armenia, Cappadocia, Cilicia, Isauria, Pamphylia, Lycaonia, Lycia, Phrygia, Caris, Asia, and the «Islands of the Sea», referring certainly to Cyprus, Rhodes, Chios, Mytilene, and Lesbos[10]. Even this list is incomplete — it is also known that he traversed the whole of Mesopotamia, Arabia, Sinai and Egypt.

Wherever he appeared, he began by ordaining new bishops and priests for the local communities. It is very doubtful, in the entire history of the Christian church, whether there has been a bishop who has consecrated more than the record number of clergymen ordained by him. The Orientals have often been careless with numbers, inflating them far too much, and that is the case also in the biographies of Jaʿqōb, but there is no doubt the number of his ordinations must have reached into the thousands.

Bishops consecrated by Jaʿqōb were: Dimeṭ of Laodicea, Jōḥannān of Seleucia in Syria, Qonon of Tarsos, Eugenios of Seleucia in Isauria, Jōḥannān of Qennešrīn, Sargīs of Ḥarran, Jōḥannān of Šūrā, Eunomios of Amid, Jōḥannān of Ephesus, Petros of Smyrna, Jōḥannān of Pergamum, Petros of Tralles, Jōḥannān of Chios, Paulos of Aphrodisia and Julyānā of Alabanda[11]. This number does not include twelve

[9] VÖÖBUS, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen*. I, 1,A, p. 203ff.; I, 1,B, p. 273ff.
[10] *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, p. 153f.
[11] *Ibid.* An apocryphal vita of Jaʿqōb even speaks of 87 or 89 bishops consecrated by Jaʿqōb, a greatly inflated number of consecrations.

bishops consecrated for the provinces of Egypt whose names are unknown to us.

In connection with the consecration of the Monophysite bishops, the source at our disposal opens interesting vistas. That is due to the character of the document which introduces these bishops in a very remarkable way. The list is arranged in the following way: Dimeṭ from the Monastery of Aphthonia, Jōḥannān in Seleucia of Syria, of the Monastery of Mār Bazi, Jōḥannān in Qennešrīn, of the Monastery of Mār Bas, Sargīs in Ḥarrān, of the Monastery of Aphthonia, Jōḥannān in Šūrā, of the Monastery of Mār Ḥanīnā[12], etc. This stereotyped arrangement, which adds after the name of every bishop the name of his monastery, allows us insight into conditions subsequent to the creation of the Monophysite episcopacy. It is to be recalled that the Chalcedonian bishops residing in the imperial towns, after the dismissal of Patriarch Severos, did everything they could in order to hinder their ecclesiastical rivals from taking up residence in their episcopal residences in these towns. That condition, inspired by hatred and instigation, continued to be the case. As a result, the new Monophysite bishops, due to the maleficence and rudeness of the orthodox prelates, were not allowed to occupy their episcopal residences in the towns to which they had been appointed; accordingly, the abbots and monks who had been consecrated had no option but to live and function in and from monasteries close to the titular sees. In this respect, they had to follow in the footsteps of their patriarchs who had also not been allowed to set foot in the capital and were forced to reside elsewhere — even for several generations[13]. Thus this document conjures up a situation in which the monasteries continued to function as episcopal hinges in the reorganization of the Monophysite church.

These facts also explain the peculiar references to the Monophysite bishops in many sources to the effect that they are spoken as bishops so and so of the monasteries whose names are given.

One factor in favor of the Monophysite movement must be brought out. The concentrated resistance in monastic circles in Syria and Mesopotamia, and even in exile was, in a certain sense, protected. All the

[12] *Ibid.*

[13] Even for 203 years, namely, from the year 518 to 721, in which not a single Monophysite patriarch of Antioch could set up residence in the city of Antioch for which they had been consecrated as patriarchs; MICHAEL SYRUS, *Chronique*, éd. CHABOT IV, p. 456.

attempts of the orthodox authorities were futile so long as the realm of the Syrian spirit remained inaccessible to them, unversed as they were in their language[14].

In the east, great success came to Monophysite monasticism in Persia. In the mountain region of Izlā, between Mardin and Nisibis to the south, and Ǧezirat ibn Umar to the east, it was able to establish its leading monastic center, one which developed quickly into a place of pilgrimage — Ṭūr ʿAbdīn[15]. Here monasticism became almost entirely Monophysitic. Ṭūr ʿAbdīn became a most important spiritual center of the Jacobite faith. Nestorian monasticism, which had at first played a role here, as in the time of Mār ʾAugēn, gradually was drawn into the stream of the general development of this region, the tradition of the Monophysites.

8. Reconstruction of the Hierarchy

Two phases can be distinguished in Jaʿqōb's activities in buiding up his church. The records we have can only be interpreted properly to mean that Jaʿqōb initially wished to confine himself to the accomplishment of the most urgent and vital tasks; to create a Monophysite hierarchy at the very beginning was to attempt too much. The time for this was to come. When it did, Jaʿqōb took the initiative[1]. The first step was to select two monks for metropolitan duty in Asia Minor[2].

As to the exact date of this significant event, the sources remain silent. Some have even created confusion[3] for scholars[4]. Assumptions about an early date[5] for the consecration of the patriarch by Jaʿqōb[6] has simply

[14] A similar situation occurred in the Coptic realm. In Egypt the strength of Monophysitism was concentrated in the monastic strong points in the wilderness of Scete. The Coptic idiom which the officials of the Byzantine religious did not know protected the Copts to a measurable degree.

[15] VÖÖBUS, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient* II; p. 224ff.

[1] *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, p. 697.

[2] Eugenios of Isauria and Conon of Cilicia; the first became the metropolitan of Tarsus, *ibid.*, p. 697.

[3] Ps. - Dionysios has obviously an erroneous chronology; a large number of consecrated bishops appear in connection with the time of the great pest, *Historia eccl.*, ed. CHABOT, p. 110. It has been wrongly assumed that this section is simply a copy of the work of John of Ephesus.

[4] About this question, see VAN ROEY, «Les débuts de l'Église jacobite».

[5] Regarding the time of the consecration of Sargīs to the patriarchal see, Devreesse places his consecration into the year 538, *Le Patriarcat d'Antioche*, p. 119. But this is absolutely impossible because Jaʿqōb had not yet been ordained a bishop at that time.

[6] The consecration of Sargīs as patriarch of Antioch has been placed into the year 538, ŠANDA, *Johannes Philoponos, Opuscula monophysitica*, p. 6.

muddled matters so much the more[7]. The ground is more secure when we take a different fact, namely, the death of Metropolitan Constantinos into consideration[8]. It is known that he died in the year 553[9]. This fact becomes important as soon as we realize that his death left Jaʿqōb free to act[10]. Confirmation seems likely from another angle—from the list of the bishops and archbishops consecrated by Jaʿqōb. This list begins with Dimeṭ, the successor of Constantinos in Laodicea[11]. This consecration must have taken place soon after the year 553. The impression given is that this prelate was the first to be consecrated by Jaʿqōb. If so, then more than a decade passed before Jaʿqōb began to expend the hierarchial upbuilding of the church. The list just mentioned then provides us with desirable information on the framework of the first hierarchial organization.

How this work of systematic upbuilding is creating metropolitans[12], archbishops and bishops[13], and finally creating the highest office in the Monophysite hierarchical ladder[14], consecrating his former fellow brother in the Monastery of Phesīlthā, and then another monk, in detail, does not concern us in this work.

[7] About 547-50, according to JÜLICHER, «Zur Geschichte der Monophysitenkirche», p. 37. However, this event actually took place later, about the year 557, see BROOKS, «The Patriarch Paul of Antioch», p. 469.

[8] Constantinos, the metropolitan of Laodicea, upon the death of Patriarch Severos, was invested with the dignity of deputy. About this document and the newly unearthed manuscript sources, see VÖÖBUS, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen* I, 1,A, p. 167ff.

[9] MICHAEL SYRUS, *Chronique*, p. 312.

[10] See also HONIGMANN, *Évêques et évêchés monophysites*, p. 171f.

[11] *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, p. 156ff.

[12] Two metropolitans were appointed for Syria, namely for Laodicea and Seleucia, and one for Mesopotamia, namely for Amid.

[13] Of the three bishops consecrated for this area, one was assigned to Syria, namely for Qennešrē, one to Osrhoene (Ḥarrān), and one for Euphratesia, namely Šurā. Jaʿqōb consecrated bishops and archbishops also in Egypt, Asia Minor and the Island of Chios.

[14] When he consecrated Sargīs is not clear. In any case, it seems that this must have taken place about the year 558; shortly before that time Johannes Philoponos dedicated his work to him, see JOHANNES PHILOPONOS, *Opuscula monophysitica*, p. 81ff. Jaʿqōb had to repeat this act of consecration of the patriarch very soon. Sargīs died about 3 years later It was Theodosios, the former patriarch of Alexandria, who after a sedisvacance of 3 years, wrote to Jaʿqōb and asked to consecrate Paulos to the vacant seat of Antioch, *Documenta ad origines monophysitarum illustrandas*, ed. CHABOT, p. 89f. He consecrated Paulos the Black who was an Egyptian by birth but who had spent part of his monastic life in various Syrian monasteries. Of course, as a Monophysite patriarch, he was not able to enter his see in Antioch, having to hide himself from the agents who received their orders from Constantinople. However, he was able to find a place of refuge from his pursuers at the court of the Ghassan ruler, al-Ḥārith ibn Jabala and his son al-Mundir.

The time granted for the work of Jaʿqōb was quite lengthy and he could continue his work of reviving and upbuilding until the end of his life. It is a miracle that this man who was pursued, who had a price on his head, was never caught by church agents working for the orthodox cause. When he breathed his last on July 30, 578, he was still in harness — on his way to Alexandria.

In the company of a delegation of eight persons on their way to Alexandria for the purpose of strengthening ties between the two Monophysite churches — the one, the Syrian, and the other, the Coptic, Jaʿqōb and three other members of the delegation died in a mysterious way in the Monastery of Romanos located on Mount Casion, close to the Egyptian eastern frontier.

After the sudden death of Jaʿqōb Būrdeʿānā, Damian, the patriarch of Alexandria, wrote a letter of consolation to the oriental clergy[15]. In the year 622, the earthly remains of this famous founder of the Monophysite church were returned from abroad and laid rest in the Monastery of Phesīlthā near Tellā, the same place where he had lived as a monk[16].

Jaʿqōb's selfless efforts and self-sacrificing labors in reviving ecclesiastical life and upbuilding the structure of his church were crowned in such a way that the Monophysite church in Syria and Persia came to be known popularly as the Jacobite Church.

9. AFTERMATH TRIALS

Before this chapter is brought to a conclusion, something of the remaining history of the Monophysite church needs to be included. This concerns suffering even still more, namely, the last tests and trials.

Under the rule of Justin II, persecutions flared up again. The first years of this rule were marked by tolerance. However, in the year 572, under the influence of orthodox pressure, he returned to the traditional idea of establishing the unity in the church through persecutions. Actions were undertaken against all those who had remained outside the orthodox hold with the Monophysites in the first place. Deeds of violence were directed against their bishops, priests and monks[1]. Their monasteries were closed, their churches devastated and their spiritual leaders

[15] MICHAEL SYRUS, *Chronique*, p. 366ff.

[16] *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, p. 268ff.

[1] JOHANNES EPHESINI, *Historia eccl.*, ed. BROOKS, p. 000.

arrested, thrown into prison or expelled. Their fate is exemplified by the experiences of John of Ephesus who endured repeated imprisonments, an exile of more than two years and life in constant wandering[2]. The atrocities carried out during this period did not lag behind those horrors committed in previous persecutions. Again Syria went through an ordeal of suffering, except for the area under.

This was not yet the end. Tiberios, who succeeded Justin II in 578, exhibited the same zeal for orthodoxy; after a short pause which allowed the Monophysites a respite, a new wave of persecutions was unleashed[3]. With the arrival of Mauricios in 582, a period of tranquility followed; it lasted only to the year 598, when the wave of persecution began again. These were the last of the ordeals. The Monophysite church, however, had gained enough strength to survive even these terrors.

[2] *Ibid.*
[3] Michael Syrus, *Chronique.*

VII. THE ROLE OF SYRIAN MONASTICISM IN MISSIONARY EXPANSION

1. Monasticism as a Factor of Conversions

The impact of Syrian monasticism on the Arabs is illustrated by the transliterational transition of Syrian ascetic terminology into Arabic. Basic Syriac terms were absorbed into Arabic beginning with such vocabules as *daira* which becomes *dair* in Arabic, a recluse *ḥabīša* and *ḥabīšāyā* which becomes *habis* in Arabic. The general term in Arabic for all the different groups of Syrian ascetics was *rāhib* «(God) - fearer».

In the history of the missions among the Arabs, monasticism was an important missionary factor. All sources, even the earliest, with one accord emphasize the role played by ascetics and monks. Sozomenos reports that the chieftain of an Arab tribe, Zokomos, a phylarch, became Christian through the impact made upon him by a monk[1]. A similar report is recorded in Socrates. He tells us about an Arab with the name of Moses who lived by himself as an anchorite in the desert and who, according to the wish of the Arab queen Mawiya, was consecrated bishop of her people[2] about 373 under Emperor Valens. Socrates adds that the war between Byzantium and the Saracenes was thus brought to an end.

From those times onward, this process among the Arab tribes accelerated both in speed and power. With the emergence of a new form in Syrian asceticism, namely the stylites, this was given a new impetus for this form of ascetic life exercised a deep influence upon the sons of the desert. In this respect, excellent sources are at our disposal, sources which throw light on this new phase of the dissemination of Christianity among the Arab tribes. The biography of Šemʿōn ʾEsṭōnāyā, written by Antonios, paints very impressive pictures about the Arabs who were attracted to his column in order there to pour out their pain and sorrow and to secure the prayers and blessings of the saint[3]. His vita in Syriac

[1] *Historia eccl.* VI,38, ed Migne, col. 1413.
[2] *Historia eccl.* IV,36. Cf. Duchesne, «Les missions chrétiennes au sud de l'empire Romain», p. 112ff.
[3] *Vita Symeonis*, ed. Lietzmann, p. 56f.

puts this in sharp relief: «How many Arabs from afar, who did not even know what bread was, but whose nourishment was the meat of animals — when they came and saw the blessed one, were converted and became Christians, forsook the idols of their fathers and served God»[4].

Regarding the radiation of Christian beliefs and practices emanating from Šemʿōn's person, an eyewitness account comes from Theodoretos who was himself attracted by the famous stylite and who witnessed the abjuration of pagan customs and habits by the Arabs. He saw Arabs coming in bands of a hundred, two hundred, and even thousands, loudly abjuring their customs, dethroning their idols in the presence of the saint and taking instructions for faith and life from him[5]. He even offers some picturesque scenes about the noisy conversion of the sons of the desert. When Šemʿōn advised the new converts to turn to Theodoretos in order to obtain the priestly blessing from him, that resulted in a real tumult[6]. The summary report of the Syriac vita is instructive: «But there was no limit for the Arabs, nor for their chieftains and for their nobles as to how many received baptism there and believed in God, and confessed the Messiah; also through the order of the blessed one they made churches among their tents»[7].

In order to gain some idea of the radiation of Šemʿōn's apostolate, of the power and range of his influence, it is sufficient to point out that Ğebel Simʿān, in the vicinity of Aleppo, Šemʿōn, was visited by a member of the tribe of Lakhm, namely al-Naʿman of Ḥīra[8], the location of which was one thousand kilometers away!

[4] ܟܡܐ ܛܝܝܐ ܪܚܘܩܐ : ܕܐܦ ܠܐ ܠܚܡܐ ܡܢܐ ܗܘ ܝܕܥܝܢ ܗܘܘ : ܐܠܐ ܬܘܪܣܝܬܗܘܢ ܒܣܪܐ ܗܘܐ ܕܚܝܘܬܐ : ܟܕ ܐܬܘ ܘܚܙܘܗܝ ܠܛܘܒܢܐ : ܐܬܬܠܡܕܘ ܘܗܘܘ ܟܪܣܛܝܢܐ : ܘܫܒܩܘ ܦܬܟܪܐ ܕܐܒܗܝܗܘܢ : ܘܦܠܚܘ ܠܐܠܗܐ Neṣḥānā, ed. BEDJAN, p. 546.

[5] Ἰσμαηλῖται δὲ κατὰ συμμορίας ἀφικνούμενοι, διακόσιοι κατὰ ταυτόν, καὶ τριακόσιοι, ἔστι δ' ὅτε καὶ χίλιοι, ἀρνοῦνται μὲν τὴν πατρῴαν ἐξαπάτην μετὰ βοῆς, τὰ δὲ ὑπ' ἐκείνων σεβασθέντα εἴδωλα πρὸ τοῦ μεγάλου ἐκείνου φωστῆρος συντρίβοντες, *Historia religiosa* XXVI, ed. MIGNE, col. 1476.

[6] Theodoretos tells how he was caught by the overly enthusiastic Arabs who in their impatience pressed and pushed him vigorously from all sides. They even pulled his garments and his beard so that he, as he says, would have been suffocated under their rough temperament. In such a situation Šemʿōn had to come to his rescue by shouting from the top of his column and commanding the crowd to disband itself, *ibid.*, col. 1477 B. C.

[7] ܠܛܝܝܐ ܕܝܢ ܣܟܐ ܠܝܬ ܗܘܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܘܠܫܠܝܛܢܝܗܘܢ ܘܠܐܪܝܣܛܘܩܪܛܝܗܘܢ : ܟܡܐ ܕܥܡܕܘ ܬܡܢ ܒܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ : ܘܗܝܡܢܘ ܒܐܠܗܐ : ܘܐܘܕܝܘ ܒܡܫܝܚܐ : ܘܒܦܘܩܕܢܗ ܕܛܘܒܢܐ ܐܦ ܥܕ̈ܬܐ ܒܢܘ ܒܡܫܟ̈ܢܝܗܘܢ, *Neṣḥānā*, ed. BEDJAN, p. 546.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 597f. Naʿmān's rule falls into the period of Yazdgard I (399-421).

That the influence of Šemʿōn continued even after his death can be judged from the vast dimensions of the magnificent basilica built around the column of Šemʿōn. The immense reputation of this sanctuary due to the miracles accomplished there always attracted great crowds of pilgrims — even Evagrios[9].

The fame Šemʿōn guaranteed the effectiveness of this form of monasticism, one which was to mesmerize the imagination of the Arab tribes. Other stylites, although wanting in such extraordinary spiritual force were able to prosecute their way successfully, given their large number[10]. Indeed, this form of ascetic life was found in all of the territories. The institution continued into the Islamic period. When during the first century of the Islamic era Caliph al-Walīd wanted to destroy the church of St. John the Baptist in Damascus in order to enlarge the grand mosque, a monk who had selected a polygonal minaret known as the minaret of hours (horologe) as his column, had to be removed. Throughout the generations, this extraordinary ascetic form of life attracted the Arab tribes, thus acquainting them with Christianity.

The impact of ascetics has always been deep on simple souls fascinated by external ascetic phenomena. Anchorites and hermits emerged along the boundaries of the cultured areas and they also penetrated into the desert. Arab tribes and nomads became familiar with the cells of these anchorites. Even the Arab poets sang in their verses of the *rāhib*, the monk, and the nightly light coming from their cells[11], guiding travellers in the dark nights[12]. These anchorites did not only instill curiosity; they also awakened serious interest on the part of the Arab tribes. The solitaries living on the borders of the settled regions carried out an apostolic mission in this way, one which in many respects may have been even deeper and more lasting than is supposed. According to the testimony of the Arab poets, the humble monks enjoyed an entirely different reputation among the illiterate Bedouins than did the Jewish rabbis whose attitude and zeal for disputations was rejected by them on the ground that they were arrogant[13].

Travelling monks with a zeal for missionary work also found fertile soil for proselytizing among nomadic Arab tribes. There was no lack of missionary work for the Syrian monks who felt this particular calling.

[9] *Historia eccl.* I,14, ed. BIDEZ-PARMENTIER, p. 23ff.

[10] DELEHAYE, *Les saints stylites*; PEÑA-CASTELLANA-FERNANDEZ, *Les stylites syriens*.

[11] IMRU'UL-QAIS, *Muʿallaqa* I,40.

[12] NALLINO, *Raccolta di scritti editi e inediti* III, p. 47.

[13] Cf. LESZYNSKY, *Die Juden in Arabien*, p. 55.

Finally, monks living in the monasteries did have their full share in the process of dissemination of Christian practices and beliefs and carried it out. Even the monastic centers attracted the Arabs. They received the hospitality of the monasteries[14]. They gathered at the gates to get something to eat and drink and in this way came into closer contact with the monks.

Thus did Syrian monasticism, in manifold ways, become actively involved in the process of the dissemination of Christian practices and beliefs and in the movement of evangelization. Thus was the spread of Christianity fostered through known and unknown ascetics so that it reached Arabs individually and, often enough, as a result of the conversion of their chieftains, whole tribes who then accepted the Christian faith and were baptized. Thus Christianity spread in uncontrollable ways among the Arab tribes, contributing gradually to the formation of Arab Christianity[15].

There is still another powerful factor in the dissemination of Christianity, namely, the cult of Sargīs about which more will be said later[16].

Missionary preaching also can be deduced from the thoughtworld of the ascetic missionaries. The general assumption that such proclamation must have circled around such themes as the grave, death and catastrophes[17] moves in the right direction. Indeed, that these were the motives which impressed the Arab tribes is to be seen in the echoes which appear in their poets.

It is difficult to assess the results of all these efforts undertaken with such great zeal and devotion. There are reasons to believe that the results lagged well behind all these selfless actions. While it is possible to reckon with the impact of this missionary work on tribes and clans which had become Arameanized settlers and dwellers, the effect upon nomadic and semi-nomadic Arab groups in general must have remained skin deep, touching them only in passing and not changing much in their traditions with regard to the supernatural world.

We can, in the same way, say something about the character of the piety which was instilled into the new converts. The ascetic piety of the

[14] VÖÖBUS, *Einiges über die karitative Tätigkeit des syrischen Mönchtums*, p. 17ff.

[15] About Christendom among the Arabs, see also NAU, *Les arabes chrétiens de Mésopotamie*, CHARLES, *Le christianisme des arabes nomades*, and TRIMINGHAM, *Christianity Among the Arabs*, p. 86ff.

[16] See page 236f.

[17] WELLHAUSEN, *Reste arabischen Heidentums*, p. 233f.

monks and anchorites became an example also for the converted Arabs; they tried to imitate these ascetic heroes. One may assume that the Arabs in Ḥiǧāz were under the Christian influence, without however becoming Christians is the full sense; they devoted themselves to asceticism and during certain periods of time went to remote mountain areas for meditation[18]. The same may be assumed of Christians among the Arab nomads and semi-nomads who tried to imitate ascetic piety. The example of the anchorites and monks remained decisive for their piety. It was always the Christian praxis which counted in the first place — the theological penetration and founding of this praxis came later and developed slowly. Thus did practical piety stand in the foreground for Arab Christians. Being without literature as they were, it was natural that the theological questions which did arise were related to Christian praxis.

This confrontation with Christian life and belief, however, met with more than the example of admired ascetics and devoted missionaries. This confrontation involved engagement with a superior culture. Converted Arab spiritual leaders and clerics turned to the study of Syriac as the key to the wisdom of the church, inasmuch as Syriac remained the language of their church. To be sure, one can speak in this respect only on the smallest beginnings, of initial steps leading to very limited[19]. translation activities for liturgical purposes[20]. The Arab Christians were not able to create centers for their own spiritual and intellectual life to any greater extent. The lacking of such centers and particularly the lack of an indigenous version of the scriptural books became tragic.

Given such insights and such preparation, our inquiry can move on to treat the situation in the several particular regions.

2. Arab Tribes in the Provincia Arabia

The Arab tribes were not confined only to the Arabian peninsula; there were geographically large territories which were inhabited by Arab tribes outside of the peninsula. The closest such territory of the peninsula

[18] HUART, *Histoire des Arabes* I, p. 102.

[19] Perhaps just some fragmentary pieces with the text of the Psalter or the Gospels were made available in Arabic.

[20] About the problems of the origin of the primitive versions in Arabic, see VÖÖBUS, *Early Versions of the NT*, p. 276ff.

was the Roman province of Arabia[1] which included the regions of Belqā, Batanea, Ḥaurān and Ledja. The capital of the province was Boṣra on the southwestern slope of the mountain area of Ḥaurān.

The situation in the earliest time is enshrouded in darkness[2]. At the beginning of the fourth century the great masses of the population were not yet touched by the Christian message, keeping to the official cults or local syncretistic movements as is abundantly demonstrated in rich epigraphic[3] evidence. Only after Constantinos did Christianity slowly begin to gain ground. As Christianity gained in strength, the province of Arabia began to play a greater role within Christendom. In time, it became a metropolitanate with several suffragans[4]. At Chalcedon[5], the assignments of this ecclesiastical province to the patriarchate of Antioch was fixed[6]. The ecclesiastical province of Arabia in the *Notitia Antiochena*[7], a very precious church historical document[8], appears in the sixth place. The growth of the church continued and the ruins of the churches in towns and villages, as well as epigraphical materials, testify to the strength of the church that once flourished there[9].

While the population in the towns was of Greek and Syrian origin, the country was inhabited by Arab tribes. While among nomadic Arabs, there was a constant restlessness and change as well as the regrouping of tribal units, semi-nomads and pastoral agriculturists did not live in villages but dwelt in settlements where their life was organized along lines of their own tribal traditions and customs. Besides these sedentary Arabs, there were in the province of Arabia and still more outside, many nomad Arab tribes known to Greek authors as Σαρακηνοί, Saracens,

[1] Brünnow - von Domaszewski, *Die Provincia Arabia* I-III.

[2] It has been assumed that Jewish Christians made their proselytes from the Arab people in this area, Harnack, *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums* II, p. 152ff.

[3] Waddington, *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie*; Ewing, *Greek and Other Inscriptions Collected in the Hauran*, p. 41ff., 131ff., 265ff., and 346ff.; Dussaud, *Mission dans les régions désertiques de la Syrie*; Prentice, *Greek and Latin Inscriptions*.

[4] Devreesse, «Le christianisme dans la province d'Arabie», p. 110ff.

[5] This was decided against the attempts of Juvenal of Jerusalem who tried to extend his jurisdiction towards to the north.

[6] Devreesse, *Le patriarcat d'Antioche, p. 215f.*

[7] Ἑλληνικὸς φιλολογικὸς Σύλλογος, éd. Papadopoulos-Kerameus XVIII, p. 65ff. Vailhé, «Une 'Notitia episcopatum' d'Antioche», p. 139ff.; Gelzer, «Ungedruckte und wenig bekannte Bistümer-Verzeichnisse», p. 225ff.; Nau, «Les suffragants d'Antioche», p. 209ff.

[8] Vööbus, «Neue Urkunden zur 'Notitia Antiochena'», p. 422ff.

[9] Devreesse, «Christianisme dans la province d'Arabie», p. 121ff.

living in groups under their chieftains. The missionary efforts among Arab tribes which were in process came from monastic forces which steadily increased their strength. This development which we are allowed to trace puts us before an amazing phenomenon.

Among the monasteries in the province of Arabia there are those which repeatedly appear on the scene of events in the history of the Christian Arabs in Syria.

Information on the oldest monasteries founded in this area is very sporadic. It seems that these monastic centers at first were small, if Hit, north of Šaqqa (Maximianopolis) can serve as an example. According to an inscription in the year 354, it had a sanctuary dedicated to Sargīs which was tended by an abbot and a deacon[10]. In the fifth century, a monastery was erected in Šaqqa (Maximianopolis) and it is the most ancient example of monastic architecture in the entire land of Ḥaurān[11]. Deir el-Djoukh, located between Melah es-Sarrar and Imtān must also be mentioned, given the evidence of an inscription written in the year 458[12]. One of these monasteries was dedicated to the memory of Sargīs, namely Deir el-Qadi, located west of Suweida[13]. There must have been other ancient monasteries which have left no trace in epigraphic sources. Gradually more and more monasteries were founded which functioned as Christian fulcrums. These also became centers of charitable work provisioning the Bedouins with water and food and other assistance to meet bodily needs.

That there must have been a real momentum to lay new foundations, yes, even a kind of race to plant new monastic centers, for this there is telling evidence. Indeed, it is very surprising. It is found in a document which hangs together with an action undertaken by Jaʿqōb Būrdeʿānā. Sometime after the organization of the Monophysite communities in Syria, a division arose, one which required Jaʿqōb to use drastic means[14]. He also notified the abbots in the «monasteries of Arabia», i.e. the region of Arab tribes and groups of nomads, about his action. We are fortunate to possess the reaction of these abbots in a document[15]

[10] Waddington, *Inscriptions grecques*, nr. 2124.

[11] Vogüé, *Syrie centrale, architecture civile et religieuse*, p. 58.

[12] Dussaud, *Mission dans les régions désertiques de la Syrie*, nr. 82.

[13] Waddington, *Inscriptions grecques*, nr. 2412.

[14] He excommunicated Conon and Eugenios who were accused of tritheism. Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,602; Wright, *Catalogue* II, p. 709ff.

[15] *Documenta and origines monophysitarum*, ed. Chabot.

composed by the abbots of Arabia written about the year 570. This document was signed by 137 persons from different monasteries. These subscriptions reveal the existence of so many monasteries[16]. This impressive list gives its own testimony to the momentum which had swept throughout the province of Arabia. All kinds of new monastic establishments had been founded. Among these there was even a monastery of stylites located in Kafr Nasidj near Aqraba[17]. Thus, at about 570, the whole Damascene region, from Tedmor to Yarmuk, was peopled by monks!

However, the ecclesiastical organization of the new converts among the Arab tribes did not keep pace with the missionary development. At the council of Chalcedon in 451, among the seventeen bishops present[18], no Arab bishop is mentioned, while among the bishops from Osrhoene and Phoenicia II (Lebanon), prelates characterized as officials of the people of the Saracens appear[19]. Thus, at that time, the forming of the hierarchy among the Arab tribes was still at a preparatory stage. Further, as time went on, the situation in this respect did not advance. In this regard, the conditions remained behind that which took place on the western borders. There, due to the influence of the famous monk, Euthymios, in the year 420, an Arab tribe under its chieftain, Aspebet, set up its tents in the vicinity of his cell in Wadi Dabor. The impact of this anchorite, Euthymios[20], resulted in conversions[21], and Euthymios gave to the tribe priest and deacons and a place to build a church. Moreover, the Arab chief, Aspebet, was consecrated bishop of the tent-camp[22], Here the *parembole* became an episcopal seat[23], marking the center not of a territorial diocese but of a district whose constituents were on the move.

[16] Cf. LAMY, «Profession de foi adressée par les abbés», p. 117ff.; LAMMENS, «Ancients couvents de l'Auranitide», p. 478ff.; HONIGMANN, «Nordsyrische Klöster in vorarabischer Zeit», p. 15ff.

[17] *Documenta ad origines*, ed. CHABOT, nr. 70.

[18] *Acta conciliorum*, ed. SCHWARTZ, II, 1,3, p. 21f.

[19] ἔθνους Σαρακηνῶν, *Sacr. conciliorum nova collectio*, ed. MANSI VII, p. 122.

[20] KYRILLOS VON SKYTHOPOLIS, *Vita Euthymii*, ed. SCHWARTZ, p. 18ff.

[21] Since Euthymios healed his son Terebon, Aspebet accepted Christian faith and was baptized under the name of Petros; Euthymios gathered a group of the tribe, instructed these people and baptized them.

[22] παρεμβολαί.

[23] Petros appears on the council of Ephesus, bearing the title: «bishop of the parembole», *Acta conciliorum*, ed. SCHWARTZ I, II, p. 4, nr. 38; I, VII, p. 75, nr. 38.

Regarding this *parembole* arrangement, an interesting document comes from Severos of Antioch. According to it, he invited monks of the Monastery of Mār Isḥāq of Gabūlā to the consecration of Stephanos as bishop of the camp of Anasartha[24]. The way in which this bishopric is described, it must refer to a *parembole* settlement for the nomadic and semi-nomadic Arab tribes.

The ecclesiastical conditions among the Arab tribes and the nomadic Christians in the province of Arabia were only able to advance so far, so long as suitable conditions lasted.

3. Among the Ghassan Arabs in Syria

Besides the Roman province of Arabia, other large Arab communities existed in the eastern province of the Byzantine empire. The greatest and the most important were those which occupied the Syrian steppes and border districts — the Ghassans (al-Ġassān).

The basic stock of this tribe was originally from South Arabia, from Yemen, which had settled down permanently south of Damascus[1]. These Arabs were tributary and were welcomed as the kind of bulwark between the Byzantine state and the increasingly restless Persian neighbor.

The pre-history of the Ghassanide state is not very clear[2]. Only after a longer passage of time does a forceful leader of the tribe appear in the limelight of the history, namely, Jabala, a very belligerent and enterprising Arab chieftain[3]. He could soon overtake the Arab neighbors and become an ally of Byzantium, receiving an annual subsidy for their military services. In any case, a new epoch began with al-Ḥārith who has brought recognition and gave importance to his people. In the year 529, al-Ḥārith IV[4], who resided in Jābiya, was formally declared by Justinian as phylarch, thus acknowledging him as a «chief of all the Arabs»[5], and granting the honor of a patricius[6]. For his own people,

[24] *The Sixth Book of the Select Letters of Severus*, ed. BROOKS I, p. 102.

[1] About the geographical aspects, see LAMMENS, «L'ancienne frontière entre la Syrie et le Ḥiğāz», p. 295ff.

[2] NÖLDEKE, *Die Ghasanischen Fürsten aus dem Hause Gafna's*, p. 19ff. Of the travelings of the Ghassan tribe, it is known that under the leadership of Jafna it had arrived in the western region of the Syrian desert around the years 300.

[3] THEOPHANOS, *Chronographia*, ed. DE BOOR I, p. 141ff.

[4] Ἀρέθας τοῦ Γαβάλα, 529-569.

[5] PROCOPIOS, *De bello Persico* I, XVII, 47-48.

[6] SOCRATES, *Historia eccl.* VII, 18.

this title must have meant much more. This honor, in the eyes of his own people, meant kinship and the Orientals celebrated him as «malik-basileus». He succeeded in subjugating the smaller Arab chieftains under his dominion and to form a united Arab state on the Syrian frontier. He also brought the nomads under his jurisdiction. This vassal state, under the administration of Byzantium, constituted a very welcome buffer for the empire on this dangerous terrain.

Al-Ḥārith's jurisdiction reached from the Euphrates in the north up to the vicinity of Petra in the south, embracing also the nomads in the province of Arabia, gravitating in the north around Damascus and Palmyra. However, one cannot speak strictly of the geographical boundaries of the state of the Ghassans; one must rather take account of the boundaries of the tribes. The seat of their kings was not in a capital in the ordinary sense but in a changing *ḥīrtā*[7] namely the main military camp of the tribe.

Over a period of time, the Christian mission infiltrated the tribe along ways already described, through anchorites, traveling monks and the impact of the stylites.

Another important factor must be added here. One of the manifestations of religious life in these areas which has left many tangible traces behind is the cult of Sargīs (Sergios). The name of Sargīs had a particular ring in the ears of the Arabs. The influence of this cult and the impact of its sanctuaries on the nomads or semi-nomads in these regions has been an important factor in contributing to the dissemination of Christian practices and beliefs. The most famous sanctuary of Sargīs was located in Ruṣāfā[8] (Sergiopolis), a real center of pilgrimage located in a nearly plain desert and at the Euphrates[9]. This center exercised a very great attraction[10] not only upon the Arabs in the region of Damascus but also

[7] ܚܐܪܬܐ, in Arabic *ḥira*.

[8] This is a real network of sanctuaries bearing the name of Sargīs consisting of the churches, monasteries, chapels and prayer houses. The testimony coming from the archaeological sources is very impressive.

[9] SPANNER-GUYER, *Ruṣāfa*, p. 20ff. The sanctuary was erected at the time of the Emperor Anastasios. The population of the town was modest and practically consisted of the garrison and the communities of monks; its 6 churches were probably in different monasteries. Additional information comes from Procopios. He speaks of an act of mercy which was here undertaken. Owing to the fame of this sanctuary, an abundance of material means could be collected in order to redeem the inhabitants of nearby Sura who were taken prisoners of war by Khosrow; *De bello Persico* II,5, 29-33; 20, 1-16.

[10] The location was very favorable because of the water and the herds could be kept during the summer in the surrounding of the town.

upon those in Iraq. It was perpetually visited by hands of nomads[11], The commemoration day of the dedication of the church of the saint on November 15[12] was not only a very great religious affair and an ecclesiastical festival but the gathering around the tomb of this saint at that time also provided the occasions for contacts on political matters, allowing the phylarch to meet the chieftains of the clans and tribes of nomads, to settle quarrels and to make business transactions[13]. Thus in the life of the state of the Ghassans, Ruṣāfā played a very vital role.

That which had taken place gradually and quietly in the dissemination of Christianity developed into a Christian state. Under al-Ḥārith's rule, Christianity reached a new plateau. Numerous monasteries were erected and others were revitalized. Thus was this area gradually permeated by Christian influence. Before the rise of the Christological controversies, Christianity here had developed into a power which later was able to throw strong support in favor of the Monophysite cause. With such strength behind him, al-Ḥārith was able independently to enter into ecclesiastical power politics. As a Monophysite Christian, on behalf of the religion of his people, he became the powerful defender of the Syrian Monophysite church in its critical hour[14]. Al-Ḥārith's attitude was one which brought with it far-reaching consequences. His courageous steps[15], historically speaking, constituted an important event. It is thanks to the Ghassans that the Monophysites were able to prevail in their struggle against the Chalcedonian forces. His interference made the founding of the Jacobite Church possible. Thanks to the Ghassans it could also overcome its inner split and develop its life and mission in peace.

Bishop Theodoros, whom al-Ḥārith secured for his people from Theodora, became bishop for the region of Damascus[16]. He bore the title, bishop of Boṣra[17], the grand center of the Roman Byzantine region, but he did not reside in Boṣra. The bishop was for the Arab tribes and nomadic people and was actually a bishop of *ḥīrtā*, an encampment.

[11] THEOPHYLACT, *Historia*, ed. DE BOOR, p. 189f.

[12] *Synaxaire arabe jacobite*, éd. BASSET III, p. 310f.

[13] It is quite possible that the «church extra-muros» was really a kind of praetorium used by the Ghassan phylarchs for their audiences, SAUVAGET, «Les Ghassanides et Sergiopolis», p. 115ff.

[14] See page 217ff.

[15] *Ibid.*

[16] JOHN OF EPHESUS, *Lives of Eastern Saints*, ed. BROOKS XIX, p. 154; MICHAEL SYRUS, *Chronique*, éd. CHABOT II, p. 245.

[17] *Lives of Eastern Saints XIX, p. 238.*

Several of these *ḥīrtā* encampments are known. One was Deir Sikkā[18], the Ghassanian fortification which has given its name to the monastery of the «White Tower»[19]. Another encampment was Darayā[20], then the famous Jābyal[21] and the residence of Jāsim[22]. Then there were two others of whom Yāqūt speaks: ʿAqrabat al-Jagdūr, and Deir al-Qall near Yarmuk[23]. These were the main encampments[24], centers for dissemination through preaching by the bishop or the monk, as military chaplain at the court of the phylarch. These were also places to which the mission-minded monks directed their steps to give their assistance.

According to Jōḥannān of Ephesus, the jurisdiction of this bishop extended «to all the southern countries (i.e. south of Edessa) and western (i.e. west of Tigris) to the entire desert, Arabia and Palestine, up to Jerusalem»[25]. In view of his enormous task, he needed assistance from a troupe of helpers and there was no scarcity of the monks ready and prepared to render their assistance. Boṣra and Ūmm el-Ǧimāl, south of Boṣra, became important centers of Syrian Arab Christianity.

In the Ghassan realm, a very lively ecclesiastical activity was developed. Here many churches and monasteries were founded. One emerges in the realm of epigraphic materials and as such it can be especially singled out. It is the monastery with the tower at Qaṣr al-Ḥair al-Gharbi. The inscription testifies to the fact that it was erected by Ḥārith himself. Even the year of its construction has been given, namely, in 559[26].

Al-Ḥārith continued to protect his Monophysite church. His concern and efforts are reflected in the discussions[27] which he conducted with the orthodox bishops defending his cause[28].

From a note in a colophon of a Syriac manuscript we learn that under al-Mundhir's brothers there were also adherents of the creed of Chalcedon[29]. This seems to point to a group of orthodox Christians in the state of the Ghassans. It must certainly have been very small.

18 NÖLDEKE, «Zur Topographie und Geschichte des damascenischen Gebietes», p. 425.
19 *Ibid.*, p. 426.
20 *Ibid.*, p. 427.
21 *Ibid.*, p. 427, 430.
22 *Ibid.*, p. 428, 430.
23 *Ibid.*, p. 437; cf. BRÜNNOW - VON DOMASZEWSKI, *Die Provincia Arabia* III, 200.
24 CHARLES, *Le christianisme des arabes nomades sur le limes*, p. 68f.
25 *Lives of Eastern Saints*, p. 238.
26 SCHLUMBERGER, «Les fouilles de Qàṣr el-Ḥeir el-Gharbi», p. 366ff.
27 MICHAEL SYRUS, *Chronique*, éd. CHABOT II, p. 247f.
28 He did not spare even a trip to Constantinople in the year 563 to defend his cause there.
29 Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,559, fol. 107f., WRIGHT, *Catalogue* II, p. 468.

With respect to Syria we are better informed about the settlement of Arab tribes in the Qennešrīn region. Here the Arab settlement belonged to Christian tribes such as those of Tanūkh, Taghlib and Bahrāʾ. These tribes and clans contributed steadily to the Arabization of this area[30].

When al-Ḥārith closed his eyes after forty years of rule, the Monophysite church was allowed to build its life in peace and it developed considerably.

The same attitude was exhibited by his son, al-Mundhir. He took care of the affairs of his church and vigorously supported it. Under his protection, a synod of the abbots took place which had to deal with dogmatic quarrels; the danger of splitting the church was avoided[31]. However, ecclesiastical conditions in the state remained favorable for only as long as the political role of the Ghassans was able to continue. They came to an end under al-Mundhir[32] and brought with it confusion and chaos[33].

30 YĀʿQŪBĪ, *Geography*, p. 323f.
31 See page 219.
32 The military success of al-Mundhir (569-582) became fatal to him arousing suspicion in Byzantium regarding his loyalty and this led to his downfall; he was arrested and sent into exile.
33 The same fate struck his son and successor, Nuʿman.

VIII. MISSIONARY EXPANSION AMONG THE ARABS WITHIN THE SYRIAN ORIENT

1. Among the Arab Tribes in Persia

a. *Šemʿōn of Bēt Aršam*

The introduction of the Monophysite version of Christianity in Ḥīra hangs together with the monk Šemʿōn, a Persian by birth, who has become a very extraordinary figure in the annals of Syrian Christianity.

Jōḥannān of Ephesus has devoted a chapter to Šemʿōn[1]. Taking into account the fact of his acquaintance with Šemʿōn and also of the fact that he was in possession of his papers[2] and that he even had certain other advantages[3], one would have expected rather more from a vita on this personality than very general statements and comments filled out with a series of inflated episodes.

Jōḥannān of Ephesus calls Šemʿōn: «The brave warrior on behalf of the true faith»[4] — a term well chosen which adequately characterizes his whole life's work. The scope of his efforts and activities is very impressive and developed in several directions.

First of all, he has gone into history as an evangelist inspired by a fiery zeal and enthusiasm as well as a deep devotion to the propagation of the Monophysite faith. His missionary enterprises were carried out with unusual vigor, extraordinary agility and an admirable mobility. His evangelistic efforts were all the more effective through his use of his gift in learning languages, something which aroused admiration[5]. With regard to his evangelistic ministry, the vita compares Šemʿōn, in terms of the intensity and extent, with the apostolate of Paul[6]. The scope of Šemʿōn's apostolate impressed the author of his vita as something like a «Paulus redivivus». The dynamic of Šemʿōn's evangelistic work is described in

[1] «Life of Simeon the Bishop», in: *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, ed. Brooks, p. 137ff.
[2] He claims that he inherited some of Šemʿōn's papers which came into his possession, *ibid.*, p. 158.
[3] His presbyter, Polos, lived with him for two years, *ibid.*, p. 157.
[4] ܩܪܒܬܢܐ ܓܢܒܪܐ ܕܥܠ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܫܪܝܪܬܐ, *ibid.*, p. $137_{4\text{-}5}$.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 155.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 138.

the following way: «And for this reason he was sedulous in going out among the countries, as far as the camp of the Saracenes of the tribe of Nuʿman, which he often visited, so that he gained a large number of Saracenes in it»[7]. Furthermore, as a result of his missionary efforts, he was able to organize and place them on a solid foundation: «And he induced the magnates who were converted by his words to build a Christian church in it»[8].

b. *Šemʿōn's Apostolate*

His elevation to the episcopal seat of Aršam did not diminish his evangelistic zeal. Soon after his consecration we see him again on his missionary tours. Unfortunately, as we have already observed, his vita on the most important matters brings only very general statements forward: «And so he would go about in the interior countries beyond the Persians and make disciples, and convert men from paganism and Magism, and return again to the same country»[1]. His vita very briefly refers to his successful evangelistic efforts among heretics[2] with whom he had continual arguments, debates and disputations. Apparently the vita is intended to refer to the heresies of Mani, Marcion and Bar Daiṣan[3]. He even enjoyed a certain success among communities devoted to Magism[4]. These toils and labors are summarized in another summary statement: «But this blessed man continued to go out among the countries without ceasing, to warn and make disciples and converts; and accordingly his fame went out over the whole land, and not only that of the Persians but also that of the Romans»[5].

His extraordinary will and inexhaustible energy is revealed in another

[7] ܘܡܛܠ ܗܢܐ ܚܦܝܛ ܗܘܐ ܘܢܦܩ ܒܐܬܪ̈ܘܬܐ. ܥܕܡܐ ܠܡܫܪܝܬܐ ܕܛܝ̈ܝܐ ܕܒܝܬ ܢܥܡܢ. ܗܝ, ܕܙܒܢ̈ܝܢ ܣܓܝ̈ܐܢ ܦܓܥ ܗܘܐ ܠܗ. ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܟܢܫܐ ܣܓܝܐܐ ܕܛܝ̈ܝܐ ܢܬܬܠܡܕ ܒܗ. *ibid.*, p. $140_{10\text{-}12}$.
[8] ܘܠܪ̈ܘܪܒܢܝܗܘܢ ܘܐܦܝܣ ܕܒܪܝܫܝ̈ܢܐ ܢܒܢܘܢ ܥܕܬܐ ܕܐܬܬܠܡܕܘ, *ibid.*, p. $140_{12\text{-}13}$.
[1] ܐܟܘܡܐ ܡܬܦܠܦܠ ܗܘܐ ܒܐܬܪ̈ܘܬܐ ܓܘܝ̈ܝܬܐ ܕܠܥܠ ܡܢ ܦܪ̈ܣܝܐ. ܘܡܬܠܡܕ ܗܘܐ. ܘܡܦܢܐ ܒܢ̈ܝܢܫܐ ܡܢ ܚܢܦܘܬܐ ܘܡܓܘܫܘܬܐ. ܘܬܘܒ ܠܗ ܠܐܬܪܐ ܗܘ ܗܘܐ, *ibid.*, p. $152_{8\text{-}10}$.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 141.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 138f.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 141. Among his converts were three nobles who died as martyrs, *ibid.*, p. 141.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 141f.

period in his life, one which developed into a very lengthy missionary tour. This enterprise of colossal range lasted seven years. It took place after he was released from a long imprisonment. In this connection, some additional remarks are made, statements which supplement the otherwise scanty comments offered by the author of the vita. We are told in this connection that Šemʿōn undertook an evangelistic enterprise in many countries to the east, north and south. Then we are allowed an interesting glimpse of this charismatic man on his evangelistic tour: «For, whatever people's country he entered, on the third day that came (after), he would speak with them in their own tongue, thanking the God who had visited him; and thus also he even delivered an exposition[6] in the chancel[7] of the churches of all the peoples to whom he went»[8].

In connection with his missionary tours, it should not remain unnoticed that Šemʿōn conducted extensive correspondence[9]. Apparently he kept the communication lines open with persons and communities with whom he had made contact.

It is a matter of regret that his vita has been drawn up so hastily, leaving out all manner of facts in which we are more interested than those of which there is record. However, these scanty notes and comments leave us with the impression that his last and longest tour had to do with a broadening of the horizon with looking for new areas where his church could live unhindered and develop its life peacefully. That would be quite understandable for the man of broad vision, but this man saw in what distressing situation of lost hope Monophysitism was in Byzantium and that the situation of his church in Persia also was insecure. He would have been the sort of person who would have identified the need for new territories to provide for the peaceful existence and for the expansion of his faithful community. He must have realized that such territories were to be found outside the Byzantine and Persian empires, namely, in Ethiopia and Arabia.

c. *Wider Dimensions*

This leads to another dimension in the apostolate of this «brave warrior». It has to do with the fact that the communities of his church in

6 ܬܘܪܓܡܐ, or: «homily».
7 βῆμα.
8 *Ibid.*, p. 155.
9 See page 244.

Persia found themselves in difficult conditions, being surrounded by a number of inimical groups led by the Nestorians. The undertaking of joint action against the Monophysites by those groups was unpredictable yet inevitable. In that context, controversy and wrestling with the adversaries was bound to occur; indeed, the vita leaves the impression that these conflicts were endless. Such circumstances compelled Šemʿōn to refine his skills and to steel his energies both for the propagation of the Monophysite faith in the Sassanian east and also for its defence. Šemʿōn became the spokesman in all these heated conflicts, debates and disputations. The vita therefore calls him as the «Persian disputant» and eulogizes him as the one whose skills, energy and zeal even surpassed the ancient church fathers[1]. With regard to such confrontations, Šemʿōn developed his own procedures. He insisted that such debates had to occur before an audience and he demanded the use of umpires whose responsibility it was to follow the discussions and to pass judgement[2]. By employing this pattern, Šemʿōn was determined to extract the maximum from these debates which he directed so skillfully. He often asked the Magians to participate in such functions. His expertness and skill earned him fame as the «Persian debater»[3]. He was feared and eventually hated by his opponents. There were times when he had to hide himself from those who wanted to get rid of him.

His vita has included a lengthy report about a debate[4] with the Nestorian Catholicos Bābai[5] and his bishops. Here Šemʿōn achieved a major victory. At the beginning of this disputation, things became rather dangerous because the Nestorian dignitaries leveled accusations against the Monophysites to the effect that they were enemies of the state who conveyed the secrets of the kingdom to the Byzantines. However, the marzban who had been asked to be a judge is reported to have salvaged the situation. He told the catholicos that this could not be put before him; it was a matter that the authorities of the state were able to investigate and upon which they could take action. The lengthy theological discussion was led by Šemʿōn so skillfully that he impressed the Persian governor; the entire affair ended badly for the Nestorians who

1 *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, p. 138.
2 *Ibid.*, p. 144.
3 ܕܪܘܫܐ ܦܪܣܝܐ, *ibid.*, p. 187.
4 *Ibid.*, p. 145ff.
5 Bābai ruled from 499 til 504.

had hoped to achieve their goal by their very serious accusations. We are also told that this victorious outcome became the occasion for elevating Šemʿōn to the episcopal seat, an honor which earlier he had repeatedly refused. The vita tells us that he was seized by force and consecrated bishop of Bēt Aršam[6].

Emboldened by his success, he carried on his disputations and struggles with his Nestorian adversaries with an unconquerable will and strengthened zeal. He made neophytes of them as well as of the heretics. This vital part in his life's work is also reflected in his literary creation. The list of his writings as drawn up in his vita speaks for itself. According to it, he composed: «His treatises and proceedings against the heretics, Nestorians and Manichees, and the followers of Bar Daiṣan and Eutychianists; thereafter he also composed the work of instruction and books of objections against the heretics, and he wrote many letters on the faith to many believers everywhere»[7]. We are not able to follow his skills through his authentic writings since they have perished and only very little[8] of his legacy has survived[9].

In all of these wrestlings, he was not always lucky enough to succeed in his intent. Renewed efforts by his enemies eventually achieved their objective. Very severe accusations were raised by leading Nestorian bishops against Šemʿōn and his church, and their intrigue brought results. The order issued by the king was catastrophic — the leadership of the Monophysite church was thrown into the prison[10]. There the

[6] «He bore the title of metropolitan bishop of Bēt Aršām», *ibid.*, p. 152. His episcopal see was near Seleucia, BAR ʿEBRĀYĀ *Chronicon eccl.*, ed. ABBELOOS-LAMI III, p. 85.

[7] ܘܡܟܬܒܢܘܬܗ, ܘܥܒܕܘܗܝ, ܕܠܘܩܒܠ ܗܪܛܝܩܐ: ܢܣܛܘܪܝܢܐ ܘܡܐܢܝܟܝܐ: ܘܕܒܪܕܝܨܢܝܐ ܘܐܘܛܘܟܝܢܣܛܐ. ܐܦ ܣܡ ܡܬܚܪܝܢ ܗܘܐ. ܡܛܠ ܗܢܐ ܟܬܒܐ ܕܡܠܦܢܘܬܐ ܘܟܬܒܐ ܕܬܘܟܚܬܐ: ܠܘܩܒܠܗܘܢ ܕܗܪ̈ܛܝܩܐ ܟܬܒ ܗܘܐ. ܘܐܓܪ̈ܬܐ ܣܓܝ̈ܐܬܐ ܕܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ. ܠܘܬ ܡܗܝܡ̈ܢܐ ܣܓܝ̈ܐܐ ܕܒܟܠ ܕܘܟ ܟܬܒ ܗܘܐ., «Life of Simeon», p. 158$_{1-4}$.

[8] Three letters have survived. One was written to Šemʿōn of Gabbūlā about the martyrs of Neğrān, and another one about the same subject. The third one was written to an unknown person about the activities of Barṣaumā of Nisibis. Also an anaphora has been ascribed to him. BAUMSTARK, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, p. 145f.

[9] An attempt has been made to add *The Book of Himyarites* to Šemʿōn's works; SHAHID, «Authenticity and Authorship of the Book of the Himyarites». One must remain very skeptical about this theory. It is difficult to believe that John of Ephesus, because of his contacts and close information, did not know anything about the most extensive, namely his main work. The way he describes Šemʿōn's literary work, is so clear that there is no room left for speculation.

[10] «Then he issued an order that all the believing bishops should be arrested and all the chief archimandrites, and committed to prison in Nisibis», «Life of Simeon», p. 152f.

leaders languished in inhuman conditions. From these sufferings and possibly even the danger of loss of life, Šemʿōn could not be saved until seven years had passed and then only thanks to the intercession of the Negus of Ethiopia[11].

We need to touch upon still another dimension in the apostolate of this «brave warrior». It involves high level actions in the service of his church on his part, of bringing serious matters in all his tireless journeys on behalf of the faith directly to the attention of the rulers. In this respect, Šemʿōn appears as an extraordinary figure in the annals of the events covered in this volume.

Much of his activity in this respect remains in darkness, thanks to the inadequately designed vita. However, the episode of the intervention at Anastasios is in full historical light. When Nestorian bishop in the chief towns plotted against the Monophysites, informing the king that the Monophysites were traitors because their faith and the rites agree with those in Byzantium, as a result of their intrigue, persecution was ordered against them; Šemʿōn then conceived the idea of going to Anastasios with the request that he intercede in favor of the persecuted Monophysite church in Persia. This plan worked out well so that peace was made between the two countries. An envoy sent by Emperor Anastasios handed over his request[12] to leave the persecuted Monophysites in peace. The king consented and issued the order that: «None of the Christians shall hurt his neighbor». Because of this intervention, the Monophysite church was able once again to enjoy freedom.

This episode is instructive of the way of thinking of Šemʿōn and of the range of his action. Given such an attitude and the will for action other undertakings on behalf of his faith and his church must have been undertaken but about which we possess no information. The episode just reported is also an illustration of the way in which Šemʿōn wanted to bring the problems concerning his faith and church squarely to the attention of the rulers, whether in Persia[13] or in the Lakhmid Ḥīra[14], in

[11] «An account of these things was written to the king of Ethiopia; and since he also was a believer, he made this request through his ambassador to the Persian king, and he released them from that distress», *ibid.*, p. 153.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 143.

[13] Kawad and Khosrow.

[14] Mundhir, about him, see page 219.

the Ghassan Syria[15], in Byzantium[16] and in Arabia[17]. His ecclesiastical policy was consistently prosecuted on the highest levels.

The problems and difficulties facing him steadily became more serious. The last decades of his life fell into a time of trials and storms. The situation in which his persecuted church found itself gave him no peace. Hardly out of prison, he moves immediately to resume his travelling, covering a vast area[18]. His journeys during these years must have led him to many rulers and dignitaries. His return after seven years[19] allowed him no respite. New alarming news compelled him to undertake a new journey. His vita fails to tell about the real reasons for the new undertaking; however, circumstances point to a worsening of the situation of the Monophysites in Syria which developed into a new wave of persecutions excited by Ephraem[20], the patriarch of Antioch. Fortunately, he could reckon with the understanding and help of Empress Theodora; in Constantinople, she saw to his care. Certainly she also received new stimuli from him for the important actions which stood on the horizon[21].

Here the evening of all his days descended on the «brave warrior», bringing his countless journeys to an end. His vita fails to give the time of his death. Apart from that, the year of his death by any other reckoning also is not clear. All that is certain is this, that it must fall before the year 548[22].

2. Aḥūdemmeh

a. *Aḥūdemmeh's Mission Field*

Since Aḥūdemmeh's mission field in Mesopotamia was most colorful, it is necessary to take a glimpse of the population in this region.

[15] Jabala. A new letter which has emerged, shows him at the military camp in Gbita, from where he wrote this letter. Probably he visited also al-Ḥārith.

[16] Anastasios, Justin, Justinian and Theodora.

[17] Probably the king of the Himyarites and other rulers in Arabia.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 154f.

[19] We are told in the vita that at that time the king of Persia had died. Kawad died in September 531.

[20] See page 215.

[21] See page 217.

[22] Brooks reckons with the year 540 as the year of Šem'ōn's death. *Ibid.*, p. 157. In any case, his death must have taken place before 548, the year when Theodora died.

The region around Nisibis became one of the most densely concentrated areas for Arab tribes. Under Sassasian rule the entire region became known as Bēt 'Arabāyē due to the very strong Arab ethnic component which dominated the scene. Barṣaumā's letter written to Aqāq is of special interest in this connection. In this document a very vivid insight is given into the actual ethnic conditions in this borderland region, and that in a way which leaves nothing to be desired in concreteness. Barṣaumā describes the emergency situation caused by an influx of Arab tribes from the south, a situation which caused a real infestation of the plains and villages by Arab tribes, clans and tribal groupings[1].

In order to have an insight into the situation the most important tribes and clans must be introduced.

An outstanding tribe in Mesopotamia was that of the Taghlib. In comparison with other Arab tribes it was a newcomer[2]. Originally these Arabs were nomads in Nağd, Hiğāz and Tihāma. Gradually they had moved into Mesopotamia[3]. They settled down in the region of Nisibis and Šīggār reaching up to the Tigris near Takrīṭ. The area which they expanded covered the region from 'Anā at the Euphrates and Takrīṭ at the Tigris in the south, up to Circesium in the north. Partly they invaded regions beyond the Tigris.

This tribe has the honor to have retained loyalty to the Christian faith longer than any of the Arab tribes[4].

The Bakr tribe was a brother- and neighbortribe of the Taghlib[5] which had set up its tents in Northern Mesopotamia. Finally they settled down in a region which is called after the name of the tribe: Diyarbakr.

Associated with the Taghlib was the Namir ibn Qāsiṭ tribe, which was the southern neighbor along the right bank of the Euphrates. 'Anā was the most important center in their region[6].

The Iyād ibn Nizār, a large tribal grouping, occupied first the desert regions in the lower course of the Euphrates. The tribe was able to contribute to the settled population in the villages and towns along the

[1] *Synodicon orientale*, ed. Chabot, p. 532f.

[2] The arrival of the first contingents must habe taken place about the year 480.

[3] A splinter of the tribe remained on the island of Farasān in the Red Sea. This branch created contacts with Abyssinia, adopted the Christian faith and erected many churches.

[4] See page 242, 300, 316f.

[5] The tribe emigrated from Yemen and Tihāma.

[6] Later on 'Anā appears as the seat of the Monophysite bishop shepherding parts of the Namir but also of the Taghlib and Iyād tribes, *Histoire nestorienne* II, p. 119.

Euphrates[7]. But later the tribe moved towards the north, crossed the Tigris and reached Takrīt and Mosul.

South-west of the Iyād was the region for the tents of the Taiy tribe[8]. The subgroups of the tribe, originally devoted to paganism, became a fertile ground for Christian propaganda thanks to the evangelistic work which was carried out by Aḥūdemmeh.

The Thaʿleb tribe, a branch of the Taiy, in particular became receptive to the Christian radiation.

Finally, the tribal groupings in Ḥīra and its regions must be mentioned.

Ḥīra, situated in a fertile region near the Euphrates, grew from very modest beginnings. Originally it was a seasonal nomadic settlement which developed into a trading post and finally a town which became a stronghold of the Lakhmid dynasty[9] and a center of a strong Christian community in which various tribal groups were knit together by the Christian leaven[10] of Nestorian brand[11].

b. *Aḥūdemmeh's Person*

A real élan in missionary efforts among the Arabs in Persia is connected with the person and the work of Aḥūdemmeh. It is very fortunate that new sources on the biography of Aḥūdemmeh have been recovered from the sands of history[1].

He was born at Bālād in Bēt ʿArabāyē[2]. Previously Aḥūdemmeh belonged to the Nestorian church[3] and it seems that he is the same Aḥūdemmeh who was bishop of Nisibis[4]. We must reckon with the possibility that Aḥūdemmeh and other bishops whom Jōḥannān of

[7] Later on Anbār became the spiritual center of the tribe.

[8] Originally the tribe was in Yemen.

[9] ROTHSTEIN, *Die Dynastie der Lakhmiden*, p. 69ff.

[10] A certain Naʿman appears in the sources connected with Šemʿōn the Stylite; he is characterized as a king of the Arabs in Ḥīra and the vassal of the Persian king, see page 241.

[11] See page 245.

[1] Ms. Mardin Orth. 267 and Ms. 273; see VÖÖBUS, «Entdeckung der neuen handschriftlichen Quellen für die Biographie des Aḥūdemmeh».

[2] A territory in Mesopotamia between Tellā, Nisibis, the mountain region of Šīggār and Bālād.

[3] SCHER, «Étude supplémentaire», p. 11f. disputes the identity.

[4] The name of Aḥūdemmeh appears among the signatures given to the synodical acts of the Nestorian church under Catholicos Joseph in 554, *Synodicon orientale*, éd CHABOT, p. 109.

Ephesus calls «orthodox» were the dissidents who for personal as well as doctrinal reasons raised by Ḥenānā of Adiabene and Sahdōnā stood in opposition to the hierarchy of the Nestorian church[5].

His vita tells that when he turned to the Monophysite faith he left his family and the world[6]. When Jaʿqōb Būrdeʿānā extended his work of upbuilding his church to his fellow believers in Persia, he elevated Aḥūdemmeh to the dignity of «metropolitan of the East»[7], a step which laid the foundation for the future Monophysite maphrianate in Persia[8]. It is reported that the elevation took place in the year 558/59[9]. Jōḥannān of Ephesus, in his church history, speaks of Aḥūdemmeh as chief of the Monophysite church in Persia[10].

Aḥūdemmeh chose Takrīt as the headquarters for his missionary enterprise; it became a hotbed of activity.

For his extraordinary efforts in the mission field, Aḥūdemmeh earned the honor of apostle of the Arabs in Mesopotamia. It testifies to his burning desire to evangelize the Arabs living between the Tigris and the Euphrates, Arabs who were nomads and semi-nomads and who lived in tents and were still barbarians, savage in their manners and who worshiped idols[11]. His vita does not make any secret of the fact that the beginnings of his missionary efforts among these tribes were difficult and the results slow to come. However, his devotion, self-sacrifice and perseverance paid off. It is reported that Aḥūdemmeh at first had some initial success in his missionary efforts. However, a setback took place when the Arab tribes realized that he wanted to demolish sacred stones on which their indigenous traditions and cultic practices rested; they became so antagonistic that they did not permit him to enter their camps any longer and he had to suffer want and hunger. only by way of a miraculous healing of a daughter of a sheikh was the situation salvaged and the gates to the camps and to the hearts of the Arabs open to him and then warmly welcomed him.

[5] According to the west Syrian tradition, Aḥūdemmeh was consecrated as bishop of Bēt ʿArabāyē by the Catholicos Christophoros I (538/9-544/5) of the Armenian Church. Such an intervention into the affairs of the Nestorian church appears very probable, taking into account the confused situation in its internal affairs.

[6] *Histoire d'Ahoudemmeh*, éd. NAU, p. 20.

[7] *Ibid.*, p, 20.

[8] Jōḥannān of Ephesus calls Aḥūdemmeh «catholicos of the orthodox» introducing this title of dignity for the first time.

[9] In the year 870 A. Gr., BAR ʿEBRĀYĀ *Chronicon eccl.* II, col. 99f.

[10] *Iohannis Ephesini Historia eccl.*, VI, 20.

[11] *Histoire*, éd. NAU, p. 21.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 21f.

Once such premises were created, Aḥūdemmeh put all of himself into these efforts. He was tireless in his travelling apostolate, visiting the Arab tribes in different places, admonishing, teaching and instructing them. His vita gives us an insight into his missionary zeal, a zeal able to overcome countless difficulties and hardships: «It was important[13] for him that with great patience he would go through all of their camps to instruct and teach (them) through many discourses; not only was it hard for the holy Mār Aḥūdemmeh to instruct and teach (them) but he (also) endured and persevered many hardships, that of intense cold, heat, difficult pathways, deserts, and the bitter water in them»[14]. The information regarding this travelling missionary among the Arab tribes also comes from another source, namely, from the acts of the martyrdom of ʿAbd al-Maṣīh. It depicts an itinerant bishop who moved around among the faithful dispersed abroad and living in tents. This bishop was the spiritual leader of the tribes of nomads — having a flock that moved around, having no fixed territory[15]. The Arab tribes seized by his evangelistic enterprise comprised the ʿAqūlāyē[16], the Tanūkhāyē[17] and Ṭuʿāyē[18].

c. *Aḥūdemmeh's apostolate*

In the person of Aḥūdemmeh, there appears as a man who not only was a missionary but who also had a concrete plan for consolidating the results of this evangelistic work. He saw to it that the ecclesiastical life of every tribe was properly organized. In this respect, his vita has preserved important information about the steps he undertook in order to put the communities of his new converts on a solid footing. The most precious information therein reads as follows: «Through his diligence the blessed

[13] Lit.: «good».

[14] [illegible], *ibid.*, p. $26_{9\text{-}13}$.

[15] «La passion arabe d'Abd-el-Massih», éd. PEETERS, p. 283, 311.

[16] *Histoire*, éd. NAU, p. 28. These Arabs were around the town of Kufa or ʿAqula.

[17] These Arabs were west of the Euprates between Ḥira and Anhar.

[18] Gīwargī, the bishop of the Arabs was also «bishop of the Tanūkhāyē, Ṭuʿāyē and the ʿAqūlāyē», RYSSEL, *Georgs des Araberbischofs Gedichte und Briefe*, p. 44.

Mār Aḥūdemmeh gathered and let the presbyters come from many places; and through his pleasant words and gifts he was persuading and enticing them (to come)»[1]. Aḥūdemmeh as a result of his appeals must have seen an influx of monks and anchorites to serve in the mission and evangelistic enterprise among the Arab tribes; it is not probable that people who had to make such adjustments the kind of life which service among the Arab tribes demanded, were readily available. In this way he was able to create a cadre of clergymen who could be appointed for every tribe — with at least a priest and deacon for each.

The way Aḥūdemmeh proceeded in his organizational work shows him to have been a practical churchman who knew how to draw the chieftains into the enterprise of founding the churches. To this end, he formulated his own method: «He arranged and placed for the names of the churches the names of the chiefs of their tribes in order that they would help in every matter and affair of which they had need»[2]. He also saw to it that the new houses of God would be furnished with everything that was necessary. These efforts have been described in his vita.

Of the education of the new flock and of Aḥūdemmeh's efforts to mold the habits of the new converts, his vita is helpful in giving us some idea. In his instruction, emphasis was laid on the upbuilding of practical work in Christian life, particularly in the giving of alms and gifts in order to maintain monasteries as very important foci for the life of the church and also for the poor and needy[3]. Emphasis was also put on ascetic practices. The nourishing of their spiritual life in that direction turned out to be effective. The vita is very proud to report that the new converts of Aḥūdemmeh in this respect even surpassed other Christians. This statement reads as follows: «They loved fasting and asceticism more than all (other) Christians»[4]. As a symptom of this spirit, the vita brings to the fore their more rigorous practices in ecclesiastical fasting[5].

[1] [illegible], *Histoire*, éd. NAU, p. 26_{14}-27.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

[3] He particularly urged them to make gifts to the Monastery of Mār Mattai, the Monastery of Kōktā, the Monastery of Bēt Mār Sargīs and to the community of the solitaries in the mountains of Šiggār as well as other Monasteries, *ibid.*, p. 27.

[4] [illegible], *ibid.*, p. $28_{4\text{-}5}$.

[5] These communities started the fast of the Quadragesima one week earlier than other

The horizon of Aḥūdemmeh in the service of his converts, however, was much wider. This becomes evident in connection with the creation of an important center of pilgrimage. He built a great and beautiful complex in Bēt ʿArabāyē at a place called ʿAin Qenāyā. This sanctuary was dedicated to Sargīs «because the Arab peoples were loving the name of Mār Sargīs and were seeking his succour more than all other people»[6]. By establishing this center, it was his plan to intensify pilgrimages and the cult of Sargīs through making the sanctuary more easily available. The sanctuary of Sargīs in Ruṣāfā on the other side of the Euphrates was too for away for them. With this goal in mind, Aḥūdemmeh saw to it that this sanctuary, built of hewn stone, would be impressive and attractive and worthy to take over the functions of the sanctuary in Ruṣāfā. At this temple, he built also a great and impressive monastery[7]. It seems that this new complex was located at Bālād[8]. The new sanctuary — a complex which combined a church with a monastery — created by him became a very important center and an effective nursery in his missionary enterprise.

The tribe of the Taghlib was very devoted to the cult of Sargīs as were other Arab tribes and clans. Their special devotion is reflected by the fact that on their raids they carried an icon of Sargīs with them[9].

It is clear in the undertaking of Aḥūdemmeh that monasteries played a very important role for they provided the forces needed to keep the communities of his converts alive. He founded two new great and celebrated monasteries.

The first monastery founded by him was located at ʿAin Qenāyā which, as we have already seen, was erected at the sanctuary for the cult of Sargīs. It is reported that he brought a large community of monks together here[10]. In order to shape the life practiced in this place, he

Christian churches, and many pursued vigorous practices throughout this period, *ibid.*, p. 28.

6 [illegible], *ibid.*, p. $29_{6\text{-}8}$.

7 About the remains of Qaṣr Serij, see OATES, *Studies in the Ancient History of Northern Iraq*, p. 106ff.

8 Ms. Br. Mus. Add., 12,177, fol. 291b reads: «The Monastery of Mār Sargīs in the mountain of Sahyā that is above the town of Bālād», WRIGHT, *Catalogue* I, p. 59. Peeters thought that its location was in the surrounding of Dārā, «Le martyrologe de Rabban Sliba», p. 171.

9 AL-AKHṬAL, *Dīwān*, ed. SALHANI, p. 309.

10 *Histoire*, p. 30.

established canons to create the ascetic discipline to satisfy the needs of this church. An insight is given us into the piety cultivated in this community and with it a peculiarity which is in line with the spirit nurtured in these places: «They practiced the new and blessed life of paradise, continual (worship) service of the night and day and the doxology from the holy Scriptures»[11]. The community also was taught to practice charity in the service of the poor and strangers and we are told that a table of food was kept ready for those who arrived at the gate of the monastery.

In the atmosphere of tension, hostility and danger of the times, this monastery, too, had to pay its toll. It was burned down by doctrinal enemies. However, it was rebuilt by the order of the king[12].

Aḥūdemmeh founded another monastery, the buildings of which were grand and impressive. The place he chose for it was a very difficult area, arid and without water, so that travellers to this area had to suffer very much. There he gathered a community of nearly forty monks[13]. It was called the Monastery of Gaʿtani or the Monastery of Mār Aḥūdemmeh. It was located in the vicinity of Takrīt[14]. The founder received much praise for this accomplishment.

Monastic communities and centers of anchorite settlements became foci of itinerant evangelists and of Chrisstian radiation among the Arab tribes and clans.

One episode is of special and particular interest in connection with these itinerant preachers. It comes from a work which gives us a vivid insight into the centuries-old practice reaching back to the days of Aḥūdemmeh and the missionary work of his co-workers among the members of the Taghlib tribe. In this episode we are told how the priests used the altar plate[15] which was carried from place to place[16]. This served as a substitute for a permanent altar and enabled them to consecrate the eucharist in many places. Here the same practice carried

11 [illegible], *Histoire*, p. $30_{3\text{-}4}$.

12 Khosrow I (531-579).

13 *Ibid.*, p. 32.

14 BAR ʿEBRAYA., *Chronicon eccl.* II, col. 101.

15 [illegible], ṭablita.

16 ABU NAṢR AD-DIN YAḤYA IBN JARIR, *Muršid.*

out by itinerant Monophysite monks living and working in exile was perpetuated as they were compelled to use such provisions[17].

Aḥūdemmeh's resources and energy also sufficed for a vigorous defence of his church. That he was a gifted person, prolific also in literary activities[18] which covered quite a wide range from theology to philosophy[19] and also included other subjects[20], added lustre to his stature as a defender of his church. In a disputation with the Nestorians in the presence of Khosrow he very energetically defended his people[21]. Regardless of the accusations raised by the Nestorians, the Monophysites so impressed the king that afterwards they were able to live their life unmolested[22].

Aḥūdemmeh's efforts proved to be fruitful according to all the indications in the sources. The Arab sources mention many monasteries which were erected particularly in the Taghlib region[23].

His vita does not tell us about the results of his missionary efforts among the Magians. They must have been very limited. However, we are told that he converted a son of Khosrow and baptized him in the Monastery of Apamria, giving him the new name, Gīwargīs[24].

This conversion was fatal for Aḥūdemmeh. On the order of the king, he was arrested and imprisoned. After languishing two years in the prison, he was killed on August 2, 575[25].

3. Marūtā of Tagrīt

a. *His Previous Activities*

Missionary work and evangelization was carried out by another very eminent and energetic monk. His name was Marūtā. On his activity, we have a source at our disposal which gives us important insights into his extended missionary enterprise. This source was composed by Denḥā,

[17] See page 215.
[18] ʿAbdīšoʿ, *Catalogus librorum*, ed. Assemani, p. 192. This list includes several works on philosophical and theological themes, and a work against the Magians.
[19] Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, p. 178.
[20] His treatise under the title «Composition of man» has survived: *Traité sur l'Homme*, éd. Nau, p. 97ff.
[21] Michael Syrus, *Chronique*, éd. Chabot II, p. 251, 339.
[22] *Iohannis Ephesini Historia eccl.*, I, VI, 20.
[23] Yaqut, Muʿjam al buldān II, p. 640ff.; Bakri, Muʿjam mā 'staʿjam, p. 359ff.
[24] *Histoire*, éd. Nau, p. 33f.
[25] *Ibid.*, p. 46.

Marūtā's successor. It is a work which bears the title: «The History of the Godly Life of the holy Mār Marūtā, the Venerable»[1].

Marūtā came from Šūrzaq, near Balad, in Bēt Nuhadrā[2]. His parents gave him to the Monastery of Mār Šemuel Ṭūrāyā, located on the left bank of the Tigris on a mount not far from the village, to be educated there. We are told that he later continued to live at the Monastery of Mardas — here he became a monk and here he also was consecrated to the priesthood[3]. Of the Monastery of Mardas, Denḥā reports that it was the most celebrated monastic community in the region, excelling all the rest because of the rigorous asceticism practiced in it[4]. Here, too, Marūtā devoted himself to his studies and over a long period of time he grew into the sources of knowledge and learning. It was his desire to become a learned person; in this he was successful and was appointed «a master, doctor and interpreter of the sacred books». In addition to this, his other talents and gifts became more and more evident. He rose to a position akin to that of an auxiliary to the bishop of the land, Mār Zaki, who also lived in this monastery[5].

After this long period in the Monastery of Mardas, Marūtā wanted to continue his studies and to deepen them at centers of learning in Byzantine territory, taking advantage of the political constellation which existed at the time of Khosrow and Mauricios. First he stayed at the Monastery of Mār Zaki, an outstanding center of learning[6]. Then he moved to the mountains of Edessa[7]. Nor were they to be the last place in western Mesopotamia where he wished to study[8].

Finally, upon his return to Persia, he settled down in the Monastery of Mār Mattai, an event which seems to have taken place around the year 605. At this ancient monastery, he was given a teaching assignment in theology and exegesis, thus to contribute to the reputation of the

[1] ܬܫܥܝܬܐ ܕܕܘܒܪܐ ܐܠܗܝܐ ܕܩܕܝܫܐ ܡܪܝ، ܡܪܘܬܐ ܡܟܣܐ, *Histoire de Marouta*, éd. Nau. See also Ms. Mardin Orth. 273, p. 531-574.
[2] In the vicinity of Nineve.
[3] Bar ʿEbraya, *Chronicon eccl.*, ed. Abbeloos-Lami II, col. 111.
[4] *Histoire de Marouta*, p. 66f.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 69.
[6] The monastery was located near Qalliniqos where he is reported to have spent 10 years, *ibid.*, p. 70. This would have been approximately from 593 to 603. Bar ʿEbraya speaks of a 20 years stay in this monastery, *Chronicon eccl.*, II, col. 111.
[7] He lived in the cells located around Edessa. Here he joined a monk who was a scribe and from whom he learned the art of calligraphy. He acquired this art, as the writings left by Marūtā testify, according to a statement made by Denḥā.
[8] From there he went to the Monastery of Bēt Reqūm where he stayed for some years.

school. The way in which Denḥā describes his activities in the Monastery of Mār Māttai indicates that Marūtā also had his hand in the reorganization of life in the monastic community. At this point, Denḥā's report reads: «He also set up numerous rules and ecclesiastical laws and fixed them for the orderliness and loveliness of the spiritual ornament»[9]. As a learned man, he also became literarily active[10]. In addition to his work on the activities of Barṣaūmā of Nisibis in connection with the Nestorianization of Persia[11], two liturgical writings from his pen have survived[12].

Marūtā later took over direction of the monastery near the royal palace in Seleucia-Ctesiphon, which had been founded by Šīrīn[13]. His tenure there seems to have been relatively short. After the death of Gabriel — the influential Syrian physician at the court and a protector of the Monophysites and the Nestorians — Khosrow began to persecute the Monophysite and Nestorian communities; the monasteries in the vicinity of the royal residence were destroyed, and Marūtā went to Aqula or Kufa where he is reported to have lived in the cells of Rabban Šabūr[14]. There he remained until the death of Khosrow[15].

b. *Marūtā as the Maphrian*

After the death of Khosrow, an important event occurred in the Monophysite church in Persia, an event which widened the range of Marūtā's activities. He was elevated to the position of Maphrian of Tagrit at the heart of the Monophysite church in Persia[1]. With regard to this important event, besides secondary sources, now original docu-

[9] ܘܐܦ ܩܠ̈ܡܣܐ ܘܢܡܘ̈ܣܐ ܥܕܬ̈ܢܝܐ ܣܡ ܘܩܒܥ ܠܗܘܢ ܗܘ̱ܘ̱ ܕܬܗܘܐ ܠܬܩܢܘܬܐ ܘܫܘܦܪܬܐ ܕܨܒܬܐ ܪܘܚܢܝܬܐ, *Histoire de Marouta*, p. $74_{8\text{-}9}$.

[10] BAUMSTARK, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, p. 245.

[11] This was written to patriarch Joḥannan I; it as been preserved by MICHAEL SYRUS *Chronique*, éd. CHABOT, p. 224ff.

[12] One is a homily on the consecration of water for the night of Epiphany in *Monumenta syriaca*, ed. MOESINGER II, p. 32. He is the author of an anaphora which emerges in later manuscripts; see *Missale chaldaicum*, p. 172ff; RENAUDOT, *Liturgiarum orientalium collectio* II, p. 260ff.

[13] Šīrīn initially was a Nestorian and founded the monastery circa 598. Following the example of Gabriel of Šiggār, an influential physician at the court, she then joined the Monophysites.

[14] BAR ʿEBRAYA., *Chronicon eccl.* II, col. 111.

[15] Khosrow died in 628.

[1] The historical account of the pre-history and the event itself is given in MICHAEL SYRUS, *Chronique* II, p. 414ff.; see also BAR ʿEBRAYA., *Chronicon eccl.* II, col. 123.

ments, including canons, have emerged[2]. This elevation to the seat of a grand metropolitan took place in the year 629.

Marūtā was a prelate who was able to make Tagrit «the metropolis and the mother of the churches of the east», becoming pre-eminent in spiritual leadership. He was able to give forceful stimuli to the reorganized form of his church in Persia. An energetic spiritual leader, he engaged himself in fostering institutions of his church. When describing Marūtā's spiritual care, Denḥā refers to the ways Marūtā encouraged the people «to share in the needs of the solitaries and monks, in the construction of churches, monasteries and holy convents»[3]. Not surprisingly, since he was a monk, the deepening of ascetic practices lay particularly close to his heart. This comes to the fore in his interest in services of continuous prayer, interrupted only by groanings and lamentations, in long vigils, in perpetual meditations, in frequent genuflection and on the model of the stylites in the variegation of ascetic practice[4].

His spiritual care included also stimuli in the interest of charity and actions of mercy on behalf of the afflicted, sick and ill[5]. His undertakings in support of the expansion of Christianity and the work of evangelization were forceful — he founded new monasteries to this end. The most important of these was erected between the Euphrates and the Tigris. Its locus was a site in the desert where there was only a very small spring, one which did not always flow. Marūtā, experienced also in this kind of work, worked hard with his co-workers and carried the undertaking to a successful conclusion — the spring began to flow copiously. At this place which had demanded so much labor, he founded the monastery dedicated to Mār Sargīs. The entire undertaking was immediately put on a firm foundation. A numerically strong community was assembled to populate it and it began to pursue its goal of rigorous asceticism and mortification. These ascetic athletes of this institution soon became an object of attraction.

The impact made by founding this monastery was great. Denḥā,

[2] *The Synodicon* II, ed. VÖÖBUS, p. 190ff.

[3] ܘܢܗܘܘܢ ܡܫܬܘܬܦܝܢ ܠܣܘܢܩܢܗܘܢ ܕܝܚܝ̈ܕܝܐ ܘܕܝܪ̈ܝܐ ܘܒܢܝܢܐ ܕܥܕ̈ܬܐ ܘܕܝܪ̈ܬܐ ܘܒܝ̈ܬ ܩܕ̈ܝܫܐ, *Histoire de Marouta*, p. 82f.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 87f.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 84.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 87.

speaking of the excellence of the monastic community, states that «through them and this monastery the whole Mesopotamia was pacified, situated as it was at the center»[7]. Indeed, this establishment became a public utility: «Because it was situated in the midst, God through the hands of our father made it a place of refuge, a haven and (a place) of rest for everybody traveling there and living in the desert — at the same time an (oasis of) joy, delivery and protection from harm, and food and drink for everyone who passed over it»[8]. Denḥā tells us that those who travelled to Aqula or to the Tigris or to the Euphrates were saved from lions, rough weather conditions and hunger, inasmuch as these travellers were able to satisfy their hunger and thirst in the monastery and where the weak and the sick also could find care[9]. Such a well-planned philanthropic establisment must soon have become a magnetic focus of attention and it is probable that the number of Arabs in the region who did not go to drink and eat in the monastery founded by Marūtā were few.

Marūtā also saw to it that a convent for nuns was founded. He gave it the name of Mary, the mother of God, a convent also called Bēt ʿEbrē[10]. This place, too, became an outstanding center of piety[11].

Marūtā also found other ways to undergird and strengthen his endeavors. Among his co-workers one Abraham bar Išōʿ, a friend in an influential position in the administration of Tagrit, became very important. Denḥā reports that Abraham founded monasteries and erected altars inside, as well as outside, of various towns. Unfortunately, at the locus in the text which arouses our particular interest, here appears to be a lacuna[12]. Marūtā also found other people able to assist him in his undertakings and to foster his programs. One, Queen Šīrīn, has already been mentioned.

Through all of these foundings and undertakings, Marūtā wanted to

[7] ܘܐܫܬܝܢܬ ܒܗܘܢ ܘܒܗܢܐ ܕܝܪܐ ܟܠܗ̇ ܒܝܬ ܢܗܪܝܢ، ܗ̇ܝ ܕܐܝܬܝܗ̇ ܒܡܨܥܬܗ̇, *ibid.*, p. 86_{6-7}.

[8] ܗ̇ܝ، ܕܡܛܠ ܕܒܡܨܥܬܐ ܐܝܬܝܗ̇. ܒܗ̇ ܥܒܕܗ̇ ܐܠܗܐ ܒܐܝܕܝ ܐܒܘܢ ܠܡܓܐܢܐ ܘܢܘܚܐ ܘܡܫܘܙܒܢܘܬܐ ܘܐܬܪ ܢܝܚܐ ܠܟܠ ܕܥܒܪ ܘܥܡܪ ܒܡܕܒܪܐ. ܐܟܚܕܐ ܐܝܟ ܚܕܘܬܐ ܘܦܘܪܩܢܐ ܘܢܛܘܪܬܐ ܕܡܢ ܢܟܝܢܐ ܘܣܝܒܪܬܐ ܘܡܫܩܝܐ ܠܟܠ ܕܥܒܪ ܥܠܝܗ̇., *ibid.*, p. 86_{7-9}.

[9] Ibid., p. 86f.

[10] Ibid., p. 89.

[11] Denḥā reports that the monasteries were furnished with all the necessary literary resources as well as material possessions. *Ibid.*, p. 86.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 91.

make Tagrit an important center which would radiate stimuli for the spiritual life[13]. He worked feverishly and energetically in order to accomplish this goal.

It remains but to add concluding remarks. When the Islamic invasion came, Marūtā acted resolutely. He opened the citadel of Tagrit to the Arabs and salvaged the town from the calamities of war and destruction.

Marūtā was given ample time to create a halo around Tagrit as the mother of the church of the east. Towards the end of the twentieth year of his episcopate, his energies began to ebb through illness and suffering. The days of his labors came to their end on May 2nd, in the year 649[14].

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 90.

[14] He died on the second of the month of Iyyār in the year 960 A. Gr.

IX. MISSIONARY EXPANSION OUTSIDE THE SYRIAN ORIENT

1. Impact on Muhammad

That monks and anchorites have left their vestige on Muhammad is shown on the pages of the Quran. Muhammad in the Quran speaks of *rāhib* «monk» or «anchorite»[1]. The term means «fearing», from which *rahbāniyyat* «monasticism» is derived[2]. It is significant that the term is selected under the influence of the usage in Syrian language[3], since the term «fear of God»[4] is popular as a term which refers for the life of monks and anchorites. These observations lead us to the question of the relation between Syrian monasticism and Muhammad.

Arab authors are certain in their opinion that Muhammad had become acquained with Syrian monasticism. It is Islamic tradition that has related Muhammad to Syrian monasticism. A story which circulated among the Arab authors reflects these relations already at early movements in Muhammad's life.

Muhammad was 12 years old when his uncle Abu Talib had to take a caravan to Syria, and so he went along. In Boṣra, Syria, there was a monk Baḥīrā. Their meeting is told as a happening which carried mysterious overtones. Baḥīrā had paid no attention to the caravans which had passed by his cell, but on this occasion, he invited all the caravan people to accept his hospitality — looking in particular for the young Muhammad. This monk realized the future of this boy — between his shoulders he even found the seal of prophecy — so that the acquaintance with a monk was not only friendly but also significant for the future of Muhammad[5].

This story has been taken by many to be historical. Accordingly,

[1] Sure V, 85; IX, 21, 34.

[2] Sure LVII, 27.

[3] Ahrens, «Christliches im Koran», p. 40. Nöldeke here wanted to see an imitation of the Middle-Persian *tarsāk* «fearing» which was employed for Christians in Persia. However, this term too could be selected under the influence of the Syrian usage.

[4] ܕܚܠܬ ܐܠܗܐ.

[5] Ibn Sa'd, I, 1,99.

Muhammad had early on a first hand impression of Christian customs and the cult.

Such a situation has promoted reflections by Christians and nourished their imaginations about the origin of these relations in order to satisfy the Syrians in this respect.

This has been put down in the well-known Baḥīrā legend[6], traditions about Rabban Sargīs, his entrance to the desert of Yathrib and his contacts with Muhammad, about the instruction he gave him and the prophecies he gave about Muhammad, his person and his followers, and the conquest to the effect that the world shall have peace and tranquility — predictions which have endeared Baḥīrā among the Arabs. According to this tradition, it was Sargīs who instilled in Muhammad such a favorable attitude towards the Christians because, and for the sake, of the monks. Sargīs asked Muhammad for his consideration for Christians among whom there are solitaries and monks, devout men «who go out to the wasteland and desert and build habitations and monasteries; they are humble, not haughty or boastful and are fearers of God who keep His commandments»[7].

According to the Baḥīrā legend, the instruction on paradise and the demand for piety, prayer-life and other religious observances and basic ethical teachings, all derive directly from Sargīs.

Nevertheless, just how Muhammad came in contact with the beliefs and preaching of the Christians can no longer be found out[8]. Besides possible personal contacts, we must reckon also with literary sources for his information about the believers and their practices. These channels which remain incrutable to us now must have been open to him in many ways.

Let it here be mentioned that this honorable estimate of Christian ascetics had occurred at a much earlier point among the Arabs. One unmistakable sign appears in early Islamic literature where various pious persons have been decorated with the term *rāhib*, a name by which Islamic authors designated Christian monks[9]. This shows what a reverent and honorable estimate monks hold in the eyes of the Arabs.

We feel safer ground under our feet when we look in another direction.

[6] Consistent searching was able to ferret out new sources: in Ms. Mardin Orth. 259, as nr. 6 in the collection, and Ms. Za'farān, a manuscript in quart size, which has no signature.

[7] Ms. 10, p. 47. Note from the Editor: Under the circumstances, no evidence about this manuscript could be supplied.

[8] Grégoire, «Mahomet et le monophysisme», p. 107ff.

[9] Ibn Khaldun, *Prolégomènes historiques*, tr. de Slane, p. 474.

This has to do with the foundation of Muhammad's message. It is important to observe that his first proclamation is saturated with the idea of judgement and revelation which deals with «threat and judgement». Given this eschatological urgency, it is difficult to think of any virtuosi in this realm other than Syrian monks[10]. It is sufficient here to introduce certain personalities in order to give an idea of this phenomenon.

This can hardly be a mere coincidence that the most telling examples come from Syrian monasticism. Mār ʾAbbai «possessed a small book of the gospel, and read nothing else than this» that is, those texts which deal with the macarisms or the parable of the virgins or the great banquet — those texts which deal with the «threats and judgement»[11].

Tūmā lived in a cave and wept day and night continually repeating: «Life is gone, death is coming, perdition is approaching, the hour of the judgement is at hand»[12].

About another monk, Harpaṭ is reported to have wept and howled as a shakal over his lost life, his sins, the approaching death and the terrible judgement[13].

The most decisive element in this spirituality was the thought of the world judgement. All the thinking of these saints was permeated by the fear and the anguish of the judgement.

There is reason enough to believe[14] that such a preaching of the monks, heavily laden with the thought of judgement, reached Muhammad and caused a profound disturbance in him, one which still reverberates in his initial message.

It seems that still more can be said not only about the origin of the proclamation but about impulses related to Muhammad's public activities. Certain historical events which must have given the impetus to Muhammad's public activity have been posited earlier. The thought has been brought out that Muhammad received a stimulus for his public appearance by the preaching of an anchorite[15]. The argument that monotheism, as tradition would have us believe, was powerful enough to induce his public appearances is not persuasive. For monotheism was not

[10] ANDRAE, *Der Ursprung des Islams und das Christentum*, p. 42ff.
[11] *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, ed. BROOKS XVII, p. 215.
[12] *Ibid.*, p. 193f.
[13] *Ibid.*, p. 161f.
[14] «Wir werden annehmen können, dass eine solche, hauptsächlich vom Gericht handelnde Predigt eines Einsiedlers die ungeheure Erschütterung in ihm gewirkt hat, die in seinen ersten Verkündigungen nachzittert», AHRENS, «Christliches im Koran», p. 187.
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 186.

something new in Arabia; it would not have moved his viscera as thoroughly as the traditions suggest and the Quran hints. The decisive impulse must have come from the preaching of world judgement.

Such reflections on the possibilities move to firmer ground when the character of Muhammad's piety is taken into account. It is filled with vigils, with prayers, and recitations of sacred texts, combined with kneelings and prostrations. This, so rich in all of its manifoldness, is fully represented in the piety of Syrian monasticism[16].

Some features are utterly striking — they point clearly to Syrian monastic virtuosi. Muhammad writes in the Quran that his loyal followers bear the signs of continuous prostrations[17] on their faces. This is a phenomenon — described so vividly in Syrian sources[18] — evidence of the deepest form of monastic piety. They are depicted as the virtuosi of such ways of mortification, having hardened skin on the knees because of continuing prostrations, like those of a camel, and great bumps on the forehead from continuous beating[19]. Indeed, Arab poets speak of monks bearing a bump «as a knee of a goat» on the forehead[20].

Whatever we may think of these traditions, the reverent attitude in Muhammad's thinking towards the monks is a fact. In the Quran[21] it is stated that it is just because of the monks that the attitude of the Islam towards Christians was friendlier than that shown the Jews[22]. Here we do not have to do with an at random statement because it appears[23] at a number of places[24].

It would appear Muhammad had a great veneration for the bearers of this monastic piety. The monk, *rāhib*, became the embodiment of the spiritual elite[25] and monastic garb was very highly esteemed by Muhammad. This determined also his behavior. This attitude can be illustrated via an episode recorded by an Arab author; it can serve as an instructive illustration. Here we are told that a bishop and school-head

[16] VÖÖBUS, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient* II, p. 256ff.
[17] Sure XLVIII, 29.
[18] *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, p. 204f.
[19] VÖÖBUS, *History of Asceticism* II, p. 291.
[20] CHEIKHO, *Schu'ara al-naṣraniyya*, p. 178.
[21] Sure V, 25.
[22] AL-DŽAHIZ, *Risala fi redd en-naṣara*, ed. FINKEL, p. 14.
[23] Sure IX, 113.
[24] Sure V, 85.
[25] Sure V, 25.

once came to Muhammad to bargain for better conditions. For the audience, they wore expensive garments and mantles covered with silk. They went into the mosque and prayed towards the East. However, Muhammad, at the moment they were ready to talk to him, turned away from them; they were told that this occurred because of the way they were dressed. This they experienced a day later. Having dressed themselves in monastic garb, they reached Muhammad and had the talk about what they desired[26]. Though all this may be nothing but pure legend, it is true to life.

However, another part of the monks was denounced. This is puzzling. It seems that this refers to those who left their cells and assumed positions as leaders of the communities and bishops[27].

The spiritual and ethical power of the Syrian monasticism which has exercised so deep an influence upon Muhammad, was such that it even secured a future for it. According to an Islamic tradition, Muhammad was reported to have had a presentiment about this development and its deeper impact upon Islam, as expressed in his prophecy: when 380 years shall have passed in his community, monasticism, too, would be in Islam and monasteries would be found upon the mountains. This certainly is nothing else than the actual historical development produced under the impact of Syrian monasticism, but for whose sanction the prediction had been put on the lips of Muhammad.

2. South Arabia

The beginnings of Christianity in South Arabia[1] are enshrouded in a twilight which often recedes into impenetrable darkness. The earliest reports about the dissemination of Christianity in South Arabia occur in connection with Christianity in Abyssinia[2] around the middle of the fourth century when Theophilos[3] was sent as an envoy to the court of the Himyarites[4]. Over and above his political mission to secure the routes

[26] *Die Schreiben Muhammeds an die Stämme Arabiens*, tr. SPERBER, p. 88ff.

[27] «O ye who believe, many of the *ahbar* and the monks who consume the property of the people in vanity, and turn them from the way of God, those who treasure up gold and silver and do not expend it in the way of God — give them good tidings of terrible punishment», Sure IX, 34.

[1] GUIDI, *L'Arabie antéislamique*, p. 21ff.; DE LACY O'LEARY, *Arabia Before Muhammad*, p. 125ff.; GRAF, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur* I, p. 20ff.

[2] See page 261.

[3] PHILOSTORGIOS, *Historia eccl.* III, 4-5, ed. BIDEZ, p. 32ff.

[4] He was sent as an envoy by Emperor Constantius (337-361).

of commerce with the East, Theophilos was eager to spread the Christian faith. He tried to convert the king of the Himyarites but failed because of the machinations of the Jews. However, he did manage to obtain permission to build churches in the capital, Ẓafar, in Aden, and Hormuzd at the Persian Gulf of Greek businessmen and converts from the natives[5].

It is even more difficult to recover hints of the earliest contacts between Syrian Christianity, monasticism and South Arabia. An echo of the recollection may be seen in the story as told by Ṭabarī[6] and Ibn Isḥāq. This earliest tradition appears in the story of a Syrian named Fīmiyyūn (Phemion), a wandering Syrian ascetic who was famous as a charismatic saint whose prayers did miracles; he was coercively taken by the Arabs and transported in a caravan to Nağrān and there sold into slavery. However, his master realized that his slave was a holy man. As a charismatic saint, he was successful in his evangelization and converted many of the people[6].

According to one report, the relations with the Monophysite leadership must have reached back into older times. It indicates that there existed an ecclesiastically organized community strong enough to submit a request for a bishop from Emperor Anastasios, the protector of the Monophysites. This request was submitted in the year 513[7].

The ways in which the Syrians spread their Christiana mission[8] were various. Taking into account economic connections between the Lakhmides and Southwest Arabia, in the first place, Ḥīra comes into account as the center of the dissemination of the Christian faith towards the southwestern region of the peninsula. In fact, there is a tradition about Christian beginnings emanating from Ḥīra. This has to do with the introduction of Christianity in Nağrān. This tradition has kept the remembrance of a certain Hayyan[9], a well-known businessman who

[5] Τῶν δὲ ἐκκλησιῶν μίαν μὲν ἐν αὐτῇ μητροπόλει τοῦ παντὸς ἔθνους Τάφαρον ὀνομαζομένῃ καθιδρύσατο· ἑτέραν δὲ ἐν ᾧ τὸ Ῥωμαϊκὸν ἐμπόριον ἐτύγχανεν ἔξω πρὸς τὸν Ὠκεανὸν τετραμμένον· καλοῦσι δὲ τὸ χωρίον Ἀδάνην, ἔνθα καὶ τοὺς ἐκ Ῥωμαίων ἀφικνουμένους ἔθος ἦν καθορμίζεσθαι· τὴν δὲ τρίτην ἐπὶ θάτερον τῆς χώρας μέρος, ἐν ᾧ Περσικὸν ἐμπόριον γνωρίζεται ἐπὶ τῷ στόματι τῆς ἐκεῖσε Περσικῆς κείμενον θαλάσσης, *ibid.*, p. 34.

[6] ṬABARI, *Ta'rīkh ar-rusul*, ed. DE GOEJE I, p. 919ff.; IBN ISḤAQ, *Sīra*, tr. GUILLAUME, p. 14ff.

[7] THEODOROS LECTOR, *Historia eccl.*, col. 211ff.

[8] LAMMENS, «Les chrétiens de la Mecque à la veille de l'hégire», p. 229ff.

[9] The text reads Ḥannān but could also be Hayyan, see SACHAU, *Zur Ausbreitung des Christentums in Asien*, p. 68.

made his business trips to Constantinople and Persia during the time of Yazdegerd. On a business trip passing through Ḥīra, he became associated with Christians living there, was converted, baptized and remained there for some time. After he returned to his country, he converted his family and others to his newly won faith. Moreover, he found associates and co-workers who helped him in his evangelistic enterprise to christianize the land of the Himyarites[10]. The same narrative in abridged form also appears in the chronicle of Mari[11] and a note in the chronicle of ʿAmr[12]. Since the business trips of Hayyan took place under Yazdegerd, then the described events must have taken place at the beginning of the fifth century[13]. At that time Nağrān, south of Mecca, must have emerged as an important center in the development of Christianity in South Arabia. With regard to the same Hayyan, the Book of the Himyarites, though representing a much older source, cannot increase our information, All it offers is the following: «Hayyan the great by whose care Christianity was sown in the town of Nağrān and in the land of the Himyarites»[14]. Unfortunately the chapter which gave an account of his missionary work has been lost.

One can also reckon that the center of the Ghassanid Arabs have contributed to some percolation of Christianity not only in Ḥiğāz but still deeper in Arabia. There are reasons for thinking that important channels by which knowledge of Christianity was carried into the heart of the Arabian peninsula itself came from the missionaries in the realm of the Ghassanid[15] rulers. In all these missionary efforts, there was competition between the Nestorians and the Monophysites but obviously the Monophysites were in the forefront. Thus also the bishop appointed to Himyar — which must have taken place under Emperor Anastasios[16] — must have been a Monophysite.

The Abyssinian conquest of South Arabia[17] must have had far-reaching consequences for evangelization in the newly-conquered territory. The beginnings of Christianity in South Arabia then began to play a greater role in the sixth century when Himyarite Arabia came under the

[10] *Histoire nestorienne*, éd. SCHER, p. 330.
[11] *De patriarchis nest. commentaria*, ed. GISMONDI, p. 33.
[12] *De patriarchis nest. commentaria*, ed. GISMONDI, p. 28.
[13] He ruled from 399 til 420.
[14] *The Book of the Himyarites*, ed. MOBERG, p. 31.
[15] See page 235ff.
[16] THEODORUS LECTOR, *Historia eccl.*, col. 212.
[17] RYCKMANS, «Le christianisme en Arabie du Sud préislamique», p. 423ff.

dominion of Aksum. In the capital the Abyssinians dominated the religious scene completely. In Ẓafar, a church was erected and the clergy who served there consisted of the Abyssians[18].

Nağrān[19], located in the North Yemen and the country bearing the same name, became the center of gravity. Suddenly bright light falls on this center in connection with the persecution of the Christians in Nağrān which has become the best known event in the history of the South Arabian Christianity. These calamities hang together with the revolt against the Abyssinian rule led by Du-Nuwas, a native of Yemen but a convert to Judaism, which resulted in large-scale massacres of the Christians. The accounts of these grisly deeds[20] carried out by the Jews have been made known through a letter written by Šemʿōn of Bēt Aršam[21], a letter written by Jaʿqōb of Serūg[22] and the Book of the Himyarites[23]. Besides these main sources, also the acts of martyrdom of Ḥārith[24], the chief of the town[25], comes into account. A poem[26] should also not be overlooked.

The situation created by these large-scale persecutions called for an Abyssinian military intervention[27] which restored order in the land[28]. A new bishop was appointed for South Arabia and his consecration took place in Alexandria[29].

All these accounts, however vivid and dramatic, have failed to tell us much about the historical background and the history of these Christian communities. That they were related to the Syrian communities, of this there is nothing more than intimation. That Jaʿqōb of Serūg wrote a

[18] *The Book of the Himyarites*, ed. MOBERG, p. 7f.
[19] SPRENGER, *Das Leben und die Lehre des Mohammed* III, p. 488f.; ANDRAE, *Der Ursprung des Islams und das Christentum*, p. 10ff.
[20] RYCKMANS, *La persécution des chrétiens Himyarites au sixième siècle*, p. 1ff.
[21] Šemʿōn was on an embassy to Mundhir of Ḥīra when envoys arrived sent from the new ruler who announced his accession. The envoy brought with him an account of the actions taken against the Christians in Himyar by Dū Nuwās, advising Mundhir to do the same in his own country. In the *Book of the Himyarites*, ed. MOBERG, he is introduced as Masruq, king of the Saracens, p. 4ff. *La lettera di Simeone*, ed. GUIDI, p. 1ff.; cf. ZACHARIAS RHETOR, *Historia eccl.* II, ed. BROOKS, p. 60ff.
[22] *Epistulae*, ed. OLINDER.
[23] *The Book of the Himyarites*, ed. MOBERG, p. 3ff.
[24] Martyrium Arethae.
[25] NALLINO, *Raccolta di scritti editi e inediti* III, p. 92ff.
[26] By Johannes Psaltes.
[27] Du Nuwās fell in the vengeance battle with the Abyssians in 525.
[28] *The Book of the Himyarites*.
[29] *Chronique syriaque de Denys de Tell-Maḥrē.*

letter of consolation to the Christians in Nağrān[30] and that Šemʿōn of Bēt Aršam composed a letter on behalf of the suffering Christians[31], that points in this direction, however, the meaning of these sources can also be understood differently.

3. Hadramaut

A source has emerged which for the first time provides information on the background and history of the Monophysite communities in South Arabia. The content of this source had been known long ago through a Karšūni version[1] of a document originally written in Syriac. This is also another letter written by Šemʿōn Bēt Aršam[2] which is furnished with a chronological note[3]. This second letter rests on better sources, oral[4] and written[5], and therefore its information rests upon a firmer foundation[6]. Due to these qualities, this source sheds more light not only on the events but also on their chronology[7].

The first fact that strikes us here is that Christian missions which had established themselves in South Arabia, namely in the southwest corner, appear to stand in direct relation with Syrian monasticism. This information, in connection with the Christian community in Hadramaut, is very precious. What is told about the clergy in this church puts us on guard. About the leading clergyman it is said: «And first was killed in

[30] See page 267.

[31] *La lettera de Simeone*, ed. Guidi.

[1] Graf, «Die literarischen Handschriften».

[2] *The Letter*, ed. Shahid, p. III. Cf. Van Rompay, «The Martyrs of Najran», p. 30ff. The edited text comes from Ms. Damascus Patr. 12/17. In addition it must be said that portions of these texts appears also in Ms. Damascus Patr. 12/18.

[3] The letter was written in the month of Tammūz in the year 830 A. Gr., i.e. in July, 519, *ibid.*, p. $XXXI_{23\text{-}24}$.

[4] The eyewitnesses came from Nağrān and gave their reports to Šemʿōn.

[5] These written accounts were «in the Nağrānite language». There was even such an abundance of these documents that Šemʿōn was not able to use them all «because of the weakness of our eyesight», *ibid.*, XXIX_{21}-XXX_{2}.

[6] The information in his first letter rests on a letter from the King of Himyar and his envoy.

[7] Traditionally the persecution has been placed into the year 523, Moberg, *The Book of the Himyarites*, p. LVIIff. Since the second letter was written in July 519, then the atrocities which took place in November the year before must have occurred in the year 518. This agrees with the datum which comes from *The Book of the Himyarites*, p. 23, col. 1 that in the year 518, November 25th, namely the martyrdom of Ḥārith, fell on a Sunday, but not in the year 523. About the complications in chronology, see Shahid, *The Martyrs of Najran*, p. 235ff.

Hadramaut the holy Mār Eliyā, the presbyter»[8]. We must prepare ourselves for a great surprise when this source tells us about the background of this Eliyā and his relations with Syrian monastic centers. This text reads as follows: «He was instructed in the Monastery of Bēt Mār Abraham of Tellā which is near the town of Qalliniqos but who had been ordained presbyter by Mār Jōḥannān, the bishop of the town of Tellā»[9]. Thus this presbyter, the spiritual leader in Hadramaut, came from a monastery near Tellā and was consecrated by the bishop of the same town. Something can even be chronologically deduced since Jōḥannān of Tellā[10] became bishop in the year 519; the ordination of Eliyā must therefore have taken place in 519 or later.

We are allowed to learn even more about the background of the clergy in Hadramaut and their relation with the Syrian monastic centers. Another presbyter who was martyred together with Presbyter Eliyā, his mother and her brother, Mār Tūmā was a confessor whose left hand had formerly been cut off for confessing Christ[11]. Of him it is said as follows: «And also Mār Tūmā, the presbyter ... who had been instructed in the Monastery of Bēt Mār Antiokina of the town of ʾŪrhāi»[12].

There were other presbyters who were martyred together with their clergy and their believers in the church of Hadramaut but our document remains silent about their background.

4. The Community in Nağrān

Nothing had been known about the ecclesiastical organization and the clergy in the church of Nağrān. In this respect the first letter of Šemʿōn of Bēt Aršam leaves us in the lurch. Nor does the Book of the Himyarites help us. At just the critical point — where the episode of the burning of the church in Nağrān is found[1] — the document has suffered so heavily

[8] ܘܐܬܩܛܠ ܩܕܡܝܬ ܒܚܨܪܡܘܬ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܡܪܝ، ܐܠܝܐ ܩܫܝܫܐ, *The Letter*, p. $IV_{18\text{-}19}$.

[9] ܗܢܐ ܕܐܬܬܠܡܕ ܒܥܘܡܪܐ ܕܕܝܪܐ ܕܒܝܬ ܡܪܝ، ܐܒܪܗܡ ܕܬܠܠܐ. ܕܩܪܝܒܐ ܥܠ ܓܒ ܩܠܝܢܝܩܘܣ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ. ܐܬܬܣܝܡ ܕܝܢ ܩܫܝܫܐ. ܡܢ ܡܪܝ، ܝܘܚܢܢ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܬܠܠܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ., *ibid.*, p. $IV_{19\text{-}22}$.

[10] See page 209ff.

[11] *The Letter*, p. $IV_{20\text{-}23}$.

[12] ܘܐܦ ܡܪܝ، ܬܐܘܡܐ ܩܫܝܫܐ ... ܘܐܬܬܠܡܕ ܗܘܐ ܒܕܝܪܐ ܕܒܝܬ ܡܪܝ، ܐܢܛܝܘܟܝܢܐ ܕܐܘܪܗܝ، ܡܕܝܢܬܐ., *ibid.*, p. IV_{23}, $V_{1\text{-}2}$.

[1] *La lettera di Simeone*, ed. Guidi.

that nothing can be made out of the mutilated text. Now suddenly a very bright light falls upon important questions. It illumines the history of the leadership of this church to a degree greater than one would have expected.

This very precious source informs us about the beginnings and the formation of the church in Nağrān and the appointment of the first bishop. When the persecutions began in Nağrān, Bishop Pōlōs was already dead; he had received the crown of martyrdom earlier, having been stoned by the Jews[2]. His persecutors could only gather his earthly remains and desecrate them. The information on the first bishop reads: «Mār Pōlōs, the bishop, who had been consecrated the first bishop for the town of Nağrān by the holy Mār ʾAksenāyā who is called Philoxenos, the bishop of Mabbūg»[3]. This also allows us to say something about the chronology of this event. Bishop Pōlōs was consecrated by Philoxenos[4] who was expelled from his episcopacy in the year 519. Since the period after his expulsion cannot come into account[5], the first bishop of Nağrān must have been consecrated before that year. Our source does not tell how long the church of Nağrān remained widowed but the acts of the martyrdom of Ḥārith claim that there was an interval of two years[6]. Further, the new source tells us that the second bishop of Nağrān was a homonym of the first. This Bishop Pōlōs was killed together with his people in his church[7] — according to this new source, 2,000 Christians were burned inside the church in Nağrān. In connection with this martyrdom, the following important information is given: «Pōlōs, another bishop, who was consecrated as the second (bishop) for the town of Nağrān by the very same Mār ʾAksnāyā, the bishop of Mabbūg»[8]. As

[2] *The Book of the Himyarites*, ed. MOBERG, p. 22, col. 1. It is told that he had been martyred in the royal town of Ẓafār of the Himyarites, *The Letter*, p. VI$_{20-23}$.

[3] ܘܡܪܝ، ܦܘܠܘܣ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܬܬܣܝܡ ܗܘܐ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܩܕܡܝܐ ܠܢܓܪܢ ܠܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܢ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܡܪܝ، ܐܟܣܢܝܐ : ܗܘ ܕܡܬܩܪܐ ܦܝܠܘܟܣܢܘܣ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܡܒܘܓ, *ibid.*, p. VI$_{17-20}$.

[4] See page 198ff.

[5] Philoxenos was exiled to Gangra and afterwards to Philippopolis.

[6] Οἱ δὲ ἀρχηγοὶ πάντες τῆς πόλεως μιᾷ φωνῇ εἶπον τοῦτον τεθνάναι πρὸ διετοῦς χρόνου, *Martyrium Arethae*, p. 724.

[7] *The Letter*, p. VII.

[8] ܦܘܠܘܣ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܐܚܪܢܐ ܗܘ ܕܬܢܝܢܘܬܗ ܒܗ ܡܢܗ ܕܡܪܝ، ܐܟܣܢܝܐ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܡܒܘܓ، ܐܬܬܣܝܡ ܕܬܪܝܢ ܠܢܓܪܢ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ. *ibid.*, p. VII$_{1-3}$.

we have seen, this consecration, too, must have taken place before the year 519.

The new source enriches us with another precious datum, one which throws light on the range of the missionary operations of Syrian monasticism. In the concluding section of this letter[9] which brings us an account of the clergy who were burned in the church of Nağrān, among other presbyters Eliyā is introduced. The relevant sentence reads: «Eliyā, the presbyter, who was from Ḥīrta of Nuʿmān, at one time had been a disciple of the blessed Mār Nuʿmān, son of Mikaʾēl, who was laid to rest in the holy convent of the Monastery of Mār Bass of Ḥūrym»[10]. Here the connection of the presbyter Eliyā in Nağrān[11] with one of the most celebrated Syrian monasteries[12] is most instructive.

From still another angle, the new source affords important insights. It unfolds before our eyes institutions typical of Syrian Christianity, especially of those concerning ascetics. In connection with the mass murder carried out by the Jews in an overcrowded church, we are given a glimpse of the leadership at all levels: «And they brought in the presbyters, the deacons, the subdeacons, the readers[13], the sons of the covenant[14] and the daughters of the covenant[15] and the lay people»[16]. The references to the sons of the covenant and the daughters of the covenant also appear in a number of individual episodes. Supplemental information in connection with the daughters of the covenant shows up at another place which also mentions nuns[17].

Insight into the composition of the clergy in the church of Nağrān under the Syrian bishops[18] is also found in our source.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. XXXII.

[10] ܐܠܝܐ ܩܫܝܫܐ ܕܡܢ ܚܝܪܬܐ ܕܢܥܡܢ. ܬܠܡܝܕܗ، ܗܘܐ ܒܗ ܠܛܘܒܢܐ ܕܡܪܝ، ܢܥܡܢ. ܒܪ ܡܝܟܐܝܠ. ܗܘ ܕܐܬܬܢܝܚ ܒܥܘܡܪܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܕܝܪܐ ܕܡܪܝ، ܒܣ ܕܚܘܪܝܡ ✤, *ibid.*, p. XXXII$_{3-6}$.

[11] See page 268f.

[12] About the location of this monastery see HONIGMANN, *Évêques et évêchés monophysites*, p. 188ff.

[13] ܩܪܘܝܐ.

[14] ܒܢܝ ܩܝܡܐ.

[15] ܒܢܬ ܩܝܡܐ.

[16] ܘܐܥܠܘ ܠܩܫܝܫܐ ܘܠܡܫܡܫܢܐ. ܘܠܐܦܘܕܝܩܢܘ. ܘܠܩܪܘܝܐ. ܘܠܒܢܝ ܩܝܡܐ ܘܠܒܢܬ ܩܝܡܐ. ܘܠܥܠܡܝܐ, *The Letter*, p. VII$_{6-7}$.

[17] ܘܕܝܪܝܬܐ, *ibid.*, p. XVII$_{24}$. It is recorded that the monastery Dair Nağrān was connected with the church in Nağrān, YAQUT, *Muʿğam al-buldān*, II, p. 703f.

[18] These clergymen who were burned together with the church and the believers therein,

The Axumite armed forces returned in the year 525, re-conquered the land and killed the Jewish tyrant, Du Nuwas[19].

The missionaries must have found a grateful mission field among the tribes in Nağrān. Particularly one tribe called Banu Ḥārith ibn Kaʿb stood out later on for its firm stand in Christian testimony. Thus did the church of Nağrān maintain its life[20].

5. In Ethiopia

a. *Data About the Beginnings*

The earliest phase in the Christianization of Abyssinia lies in impenetrable darkness. There is only a certain hint to the effect that Christian missionaries from Syria were in Abyssinia before the rise of Arianism[1]. It is a pity that we know almost nothing about the circumstances. It is interesting to recall here the fact that Philostorgios tells us about an ancient Syrian colony eastward of Aksum[2]. Was this the base of Christian infiltration and missionary enterprise in Abyssinia? That is a question for which we have no answer. Whatever its efforts may have been, according to all indications these must have been ephemeral in character.

The documents which claim to offer information about early church historical development in Abyssinia are themselves beset with complicated problems. Here legend and history have grown together so thoroughly during the course of the centuries that we are often not able to distinguish between fact and fiction. What Rufinus[3] and Greek

are characterized in the following way: the presbyters were Roman, Nağranite, Syrian and Persian, the archdeacons as Roman and deacons as Abyssinian and Nağranite, *ibid.*, p. XXXII$_{1-10}$.

[19] See an inscription found at Mareb which marks the victory over Du Nuwas, in KAMIL, «An Ethiopic Inscription Found at Mareb», p. 56f.; see also DEGEN- MÜLLER-ROLEG, *Neue Ephemeris für semitische Epigraphik* I, p. 59ff.

[20] There is a report according to which a delegation of the Christians from Nağrān appeared in Medina to negotiate terms with Muhammad. This took place in the last years of his life.

[1] GUIDI, «La chiesa abissina», p. 124f.

[2] Αὔξουμις γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἡ μητρόπολις. Πρότεροι δὲ τούτων τῶν Αὐξουμίτων ἐπὶ τὸν ἐξωτάτω πρὸς ἀνατολὰς καθήκοντες Ὠκεανὸν παροικοῦσιν οἱ Σύροι, ταύτην τὴν κλῆσιν καὶ παρὰ τοῖς ἐκεῖσε φέροντες, Ἀλέξανδρος δὲ παρὰ τούτοις ὁ Μακεδὼν ἐκ τῆς Συρίας ἀναστήσας, ἐνταυθοῖ κατῴκισεν· οἳ καὶ νῦν ἔτι τῇ πατρῴῳ φωνῇ κέχρηνται, *Historia eccl.* III, 6, ed. BIDEZ, p. 35.

[3] *Historia eccl.* X, 9, ed. MOMMSEN, p. 971ff.

authors on the one hand[4] and Ethiopian sources on the other offer, exhibits deep gaps at many points, so many that it becomes very difficult on the basis of these sources to achieve a proper orientation.

The first definite historical figure in the Christianization of Abyssinia is Frumentios[5]. Here we have a firmer ground under our feet. An authority no less than Athanasios of Alexandria himself testifies concerning him[6]. His work has also been recorded by Rufinus who gives a detailed report on the arrival and the activity of this young man from Tyr[7]. According to these records, Frumentios was successful[8] and became the head of the Ethiopic church as Abba Salama[9]. However, this story of an early evangelization of Ethiopia[10] is not without serious problems. Regardless of the obvious accretions of a legendary nature, it seems to have been based on some sort[11] of an historical kernel[12]. The missionary efforts were crowned by success even within the royal house itself, namely of that of King ʿEzānā[13] who was converted to the Christian faith[14]. Proof of this is found in numismatic[15] and epigraphic[16] sources.

[4] SOCRATES, *Historia eccl.* I, 19, ed. MIGNE, col. 125ff.; SOZOMENOS, *Historia eccl.* II, 24, ed. MIGNE, col. 996ff.; THEODORETOS, *Historia eccl.* I, 22, ed. MIGNE, col. 969ff.

[5] His work has been told by Rufinus, who gives a detailed report on the arrival and activity of this young man of Tyre.

[6] In his apology he mentions that Frumentios was bishop of Axum, *Apologia ad Constantium*, col. 636. This was about the year 356 A. D.

[7] *Historia eccl.* X, 9, ed. MOMMSEN, p. 971ff.

[8] After converting the royal household to the Christian faith, he went to Alexandria from where he obtained coworkers for missionary work from Athanasios and was elevated into the episcopacy and consecrated as the head of the church of Ethiopia.

[9] «The father of peace». About additional traditions regarding Frumentios from Ethiopic sources, see ROSSINI, «A propos des textes éthiopiens concernant Salāmā (Frumentius)», p. 2ff., 17f.

[10] VÖÖBUS, *Die Spuren eines älteren äthiopischen Evangelientextes*, p. 1ff.

[11] Philostorgios speaks as if a certain Theophilos was responsible for the conversion of the Axumites in A. D. 356; *Historia eccl.* III, 6, ed. BIDEZ, p. 35.

[12] Rufinus even claims that he had learned these data from the mouth of Aedius himself, who later became a priest in Tyre.

[13] ULLENDORFF, *The Ethiopians*, p. 54f.; HAMMERSCHMIDT, *Äthiopien*, p. 39ff.

[14] His rule has been placed by most scholars to the second and third quarters of the 4th cent. ALTHEIM-STIEHL, «Die Datierung des Königs Ezānā von Axum», p. 234ff. place his rule about a century later.

[15] ANZANI, «Numismatica Axumita», p. 5ff. Cf. ANFRAY, «Les rois d'Axoum d'après la numismatique», p. 1ff.

[16] LITTMANN, «Sabaische, griechische und altabessinische Inschriften», p. 10f., 19, 24, 28, 32ff.; RAHLFS, «Zu den altabessinischen Königsinschriften», p. 282ff. NAUTIN, «Une nouvelle inscription grecque d'Ézana», p. 260ff. DORESSE, «Les premiers monuments chrétiens de l'Éthiopie», p. 209ff.

Nevertheless we have reasons to be very cautious and to guard ourselves against undue inference. For despite these positive reports about his success in winning over the royal house, it would be a mistake to see in this a phase of the bright expansion of Christianity. Considerations of a serious nature stand in the way. Nothing is said about the effect of the conversion of the king on his people. Further, nothing is said about a royal decree to the effect that the king had set an example for his people to be subjected to the new faith. Still other indications support the same suspicion. We recall the significant fact that Greek and Latin sources have much less to tell us than we would naturally expect about Christianity in Abyssinia. It is to be noted that there is a complete silence on the question whether there were bishops and clergy in Abyssinia, or that a church existed there. This silence is certainly very ominous, the more so since frequent synods were held at that time in the west, synods which fostered mutual information for Christian leaders and authors on the spread of the Christian faith. Thus this silence concerning Christianity in Abyssinia is bound to cause considerable reservation. These and similar considerations tend to indicate that the endeavors of Frumentios must have been slowed almost to the point of stagnation. The church Frumentios ruled must have remained very limited and handicapped, and this not only temporarily, but even for a longer period of time. All this seems so strange that the temptation arises to draw some conclusions about the slow progress of missionary work in Abyssinia.

This inference finds new confirmation from Ethiopian documents to which we now turn. There is a group of sources which testify to the fact that the advance of the Christian faith in Abyssinia needed a new impetus[17]. And only this new factor advanced the missionary work so decisively that the country became Christianized. This fresh impulse must have taken place before the beginning of the sixth century, because according to the witness of Semʿōn of Bēt Aršām[18] and Kosmas Indiopleustes[19] — both flourished in the first part of the sixth century — the country was then already Christianized. Thus, after an interval of

[17] Among other sources, chiefly of hagiographical, two deserve special mention: the Ethiopian synaxarium, *Synaxaire éthiopien*, éd. GUIDI-GRÉBAUT; the other is a section in the Maṣḥafa Mestir, «Book of Mystery», completed in 1424 by Giyorgis, Son of Ḥezba Ṣyon, who describes here the beginnings of Christianity in Abyssinia, Ms. Paris Aeth. 113, fol. 59b.

[18] *La lettera di Simeone vescovo de Bêth Aršâm*, ed. GUIDI, p. 502ff.

[19] *Topographia christiana*, ed. MIGNE, col. 169.

silence covering a century and a half, some information about the status of the church in Ethiopia comes down to us. The strongest evidence comes from Kosmas Indiopleustes who reports that he found the country thoroughly Christianized.

When we put the new data and some hints at our disposal together, we get the impression that the Christianization of the country required a rather long period of time, and that during this time the spread of Christianity needed more than one impulse in order to become established in Abyssinia. According to all we can observe in the sources, there must have been a stimulus. In this respect, the most vital force appears to have come from the outside.

b. *New Stimuli by the Syrian Monks*

Noteworthy among the immigrants who helped to evangelize the remaining pagan areas in the northern part of the Aksumite kingdom were not a few monks, nuns, priests and hermits from Egypt and Syria[1]. Among these newcomers were nine celebrated monks, who, because of their vigorous missionary activity and reputation for piety and creative work in a number of areas of ecclesiastical life, were accorded the status of sainthood. The Ethiopians have remenbered the men connected with this impetus. According to their tradition, these were immigrant monks who first arrived in Tigre and later went on to the northeastern part of the country.

The Chronicle of the Kings and the Synaxarium[2] have immortalized their names as follows: Za-Mīkāʾēl called ʾAragāwi, Panṭaleōn, Isaak called Garīma, ʾAfṣē, Gūba,ʾAlēf called ʿŌṣ, Maṭāʿ or Yemʿatā, Līqānōs, and Ṣeḥmā[3]. This list of names is highly interesting because it offers Aramaic names and reveals to us the fact that these monks were Syrians. Also, that which we hear about their religio-ascetic ideas and manners points not to the realm of Graeco-Byzantine, but to Syrian monasticism. What we are told about the life and manners of these monks is the typical and characteristic physiognomy of the heightened forms of mortifi-

[1] Be it mentioned here what Theodoretos has tell us. He gives us an account that among the pilgrims who visited Šemʿōn on his pillar, there were also people from Ethiopia; *Historia religiosa*, ed. MIGNE, col. 1473.

[2] *Synaxaire éthiopien*, éd. GUIDI-GRÉBAUT. COULBEAUX, *Histoire politique et religieuse d'Abyssinie* I, p. 167ff.

[3] *Acta Pantaleonis*, ed. ROSSINI, p. 44.

cation[4], so totally different when compared with Egyptian and Byzantine monastic practices and tenets[5].

The Book of the Kings states that these men «made the faith correct», i.e. they won Abyssinian Christianity to the Monophysite fold[6].

Regrettably, background of the arrival of these Syrian monks is not clear. Until now we have no hint whatsoever as to whether it was due to the unhappy and disastrous religious policy of the Byzantine rulers who possessed a proven talent of agitating the inhabitants of the Eastern provinces against the state, or whether it was due to the natural zeal of expanding Monophysitism or to church political considerations, namely, to find new allies in the South at a time when they felt a gathering of the storm clouds.

Another possibility is that these Syrian monks came from Southern Arabia, which is much closer to Ethiopia, and not from Syria. We know that Christianity which flourished in Himyar, particularly in Nağrān, already before the year 500 A.D. was Syrian and in intimate contact with the Syrian Church[7].

c. *Their accomplishments*

The exact time of their arrival, as we said, cannot be determined. But we are more fortunate in another respect. We are able to hear something about the significance of the role which they played. In a series of Ethiopian documents, these men are celebrated as the fathers of Christianity in Abyssinia. We hear that they reformed customs, introduced Christian discipline and successfully fostered religious and ecclesiastical institutions. Further, they gave the church its liturgy and established monasticism. As the information stands, we must conclude that their influence and impact covered the entire field of spiritual life, and that owing to this impetus, the Christian cause took a new turn in the country. Such a state of affairs might make the Ethiopic tradition more

[4] The best example is presented by Pantalēōn. He chose for his abode a place with rough natural conditions in the wilderness where he lived in a most primitive cell. The pattern of asceticism and mortification which he carried out in his cell display extreme forms: continuous standing on his feet, long vigils, radical curtailment of sleep, eating and drinking. *Acta Pantaleonis*, ed. ROSSINI, p. 45f.

[5] VÖÖBUS, *Die Spuren eines älteren äthiopischen Evangelientextes*, p. 5ff.

[6] *Documenta ad illustrandam historiam*, ed. ROSSINI.

[7] To these Monophysites Jaʿqōb of Serūg sent his letter of consolation, *Epistulae quotquot supersunt*, ed. OLINDER, p. 87ff. We have further information of this Christianity through the Syriac acts of martyrdom, the *Book of Himyarites*, ed. MOBERG.

understandable, namely, that Ella Asbeha and Abreha came to be celebrated[1] as those champions[2] who introduced Christianity into Ethiopia. Their names are suggestive, having symbolic significance, Asbeha meaning «he who has brought about dawn», and Abreha, «he who has made light».

That which is related about their activities again calls for our attention. It is reported that they did not only create the liturgy and propagate the Monophysite theology and found monasticism, but that they also translated sacred books into the native language[3]. In this connection, a new and interesting factor has emerged, one which is very welcome in the effort to throw more light on such a difficult area of study. The more so because nothing more has been recorded by the Ethiopian sources concerning the origin of the translation of the sacred books[4]. A new pathway has been opened. It leads through the research on the translation of the gospels into Ethiopic. The above-mentioned record has invited an attempt to find out the truth and, indeed, these efforts have been rewarded. The earliest literary monuments in the genre of hagiographical sources[5] were submitted to examination. In fact, they contain a kind of archaic gospel text which, due to its peculiar renderings, could come only from the Old Syriac version[6]. It is the pursuit which can be deepened even more. An undertaking to ferret out the most archaic strata in the tradition of the gospel text itself has also been rewarded. This investigation has led to an archaic layer in the textual history of the Ethiopic version which could come only from the ancient biblical traditions of the Syrians[7]. This search has opened up a new avenue and certain manuscripts with such archaic strata will bring

[1] During the 6th cent. two champions of the Christian faith ruled, one in Aksum named Ella Asbeha and the other at Himyar in Yemen named Abraham. The two rulers were not related to each other. Later one these legendary traditions were gathered about both in Abyssinian and Arabic sources and they came to be celebrated as the twin brothers who introduced Christianity.

[2] See also JONES-MONROE, *A History of Abyssinia*, p. 29ff.

[3] KAMMERER, *Essai sur l'histoire antique d'Abyssinie, p. 103ff.*

[4] Native Ethiopian tradition presents the claim that the version was produced in the time of Frumentios. This is a view which has been followed by COULBEAUX, *Histoire politique et religieuse d'Abyssinie* I, p. 172.

[5] *Vita Eustathii*, ed. TURAIEV; *Acta Baṣalota Mikāʾēl*, ed. ROSSINI; *Acta Aaronis*, ed. TURAIEV; *Acta Philippi*, ed. TURAIEV; *Acta Honorii*, ed. ROSSINI and *Acta Takla Ḥawāryāt*, ed. ROSSINI.

[6] VÖÖBUS, *Die Spuren eines alteren äthiopischen Evangelientextes*, p. 23ff.

[7] VÖÖBUS, *Early Versions of the NT.*, p. 257ff.

out more light. It is gratifying that such light comes from unexpected quarters which are able to illumine something of the accomplishments of the Syrian monks in Abyssinia.

Thus, as the information stands, we must conclude that the influence and impact made by the Syrian monks in Abyssinia has covered the entire field of spiritual and ecclesiastical life, and that the resurgence of Christianity in the country of the Negus is to their credit.

X. MONASTICISM IN THE LIGHT OF THE LEGISLATIVE SOURCES

1. Anonymous Canons for the Monastic Communities

a. *The Sources*

A very interesting cycle of rules bears the title: «Canons which are necessary for the monks»[1]. Here we have a document[2] of signal importance.

In the transmission of these canons, several strata can be discerned. The earliest layer is found in a number of sources. The oldest attainable form of the text is preserved in Ms. Mardin Orth. 157[3]. Another branch in the textual transmission[4] exhibits deviations from this pattern[5]. Finally, in addition, there is another form[6] of the same cycle, one which goes its own way. It is a recension which displays changes in structure, involving also various combinations, omissions and reductions[7] but as well as supplementations[8].

The text of canons in this cycle has been edited[9].

The preservation of these texts is anonymous. Tradition, too, has forgotten all information about the origin of these canons and the circumstances under which they came into existence. Consequently, that which these texts themselves are willing to tell us is all that can be put at our disposal.

Close examination of these texts reveals a number of hints and indications which are able to assist us in the discussion of literary critical

[1] ܩܢܘܢܐ ܕܡܬܒܥܝܢ ܠܕܝܪܝܐ.

[2] Vööbus, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen*, I, 1,B, p. 363ff.

[3] Fol. 101b-103b. The codex is from the 16th cent. Other witnesses are: Ms. Harvard Har. 36, fol. 2a-3b, of the year 1796/7 A. D., and Ms. Mosul Orth. 209, fol. 41a-42b, of the year 1911 A. D.

[4] Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 302, fol. 38a-39b, of the year 1699 A. D.

[5] Important deviations appear in Can. 2 (3) which changed the meaning entirely.

[6] Ms. Mardin Orth. 422, fol. 2b-3b; this folio appears in a manuscript which was written in 1473/4 A.D. but the folio is written by a recent hand.

[7] Vööbus, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen* I, 1,B, p. 363.

[8] Can. 1 is recast in such a way that the prescription for psalmody has been supplemented with the requirement for the *būrkē*, *marmyātā* and even with the ejection: ܒܪܟ ܡܪܝ *barek Māri.*

[9] *Syriac and Arabic Documents*, ed. Vööbus, p. 71ff.

and historical problems. Such a scrutiny shows that this collection cannot be of one cast; it has drawn its content from various sources of older origin.

One source which can be detected is a cycle of canons which has circulated under Marūtā's name. The canon on the qualities of the abbot is cast in the same way — in part even verbally identical — as those of this author[10]. The same is true of the canon on the *rabbaitā*[11]. Should a shadow of doubt remain, that is dispelled by the observation that the *Vorlage* in a section of four consecutive canons on the duties of monks appears in the same source; this has to do with the section entitled: «About the discipline and laws of the monks». The order of these four rules in our document[12] and in the canons of Marūtā[13] display exactly the same sequence.

Something of another source, one which can be identified with the rules of Rabbūlā, also emerges. There are two canons whose features are too characteristic to be explained in any other way than by relation to the cycle of canons by Rabbūlā. One is the canon on possessions in the monasteries[14] and the second about the worthy occupation of monks[15].

Moreover, it seems that still another source can be identified. That which is expressed in the canon about the zeal in doctrine for the tenets of the church reminds us of the canons of Philoxenos[16] — all the more so because this is an unusual feature in this genre of sources.

The outcome of analysis is clear — in these texts we have to do with a compilation drawn from a number of sources. That, in turn, tells us how the words in the prescript, which introduce these canons, namely: «A selection (lit. few) of canons which are necessary for the monks», are to be construed[17].

Although some canons may be identified as drawn from certain

[10] Can. 19: «An abbot who has chastily been educated in a monastery and knows the canons of the monks»; compare this with Marūtā's can. XXXVIII,1: «An abbot ... who has been educated in a monastery, knows the canons of monasticism». The canon is ascribed to Marūtā.

[11] Can. 21: «And he shall not be greedy in eating and drinking»; compare it with Marūtā's can. X,1: «It is not permitted ... to be greedy to eat and drink, *ibid.*

[12] Can. 23, 24, 25 and 26.

[13] Can. 5, 7, 8 and 9.

[14] Can. 10 and 25.

[15] Can. 3 and 9.

[16] Can. 14: «Zeal in doctrine for the church»; see can. 1 of Philoxenos in Ms. Vatican Syr. 126, fol. 392a: «The zeal of faith».

[17] ܩܠܝܠ ܩܢܘܢܐ ܕܡܣܬܢܩܝܢ ܠܕܝܪܝܐ.

sources, the majority of the texts represents unknown records and therein lies the special and unique value of this cycle. It provides access to a reservoir of traditions of canonical literature designed for monasticism which otherwise would have been completely lost.

The text of this cycle, according to the second layer previously introduced, has been edited[18].

b. *The Canons*

Canons Which are Necessary for the Monks

1. A monk who knows psalms, shall sing; that one who has learning, shall speak at the time of prayer in the church, or (who has) reading — let him write, so that he may not be condemned with that one who hid his talent in the ground.

2. A monk who shall seed for himself sugar (plantation?) and farm lands, it is not lawful for him to have more — there is a ground of *sasā*[1] in the monastery for the necessity of the brothers; if he is a disciple of the Messiah, he shall not make for himself worldly burdens; if he becomes subject to the love of money, that is the worship of idols.

3. A monk who shall possess oxen, donkeys, sheep and fowl like the peasants, it is not permitted from God; that one who presumes and possesses, his lot shall be with them and not with the holy monks.

4. Except in case of need or sickness, a woman shall not enter the monastery — (this) only if she is a mother or sister (of a monk); that one who transgresses (this) shall be cursed by God.

5. Boys whose beards are (still) immature shall not live in the monastery; they also shall not wear (monastic garment); but if they shall have arrived on a journey, they shall stay for (no more than) three days and (then) shall go; that one who disobeys shall be excommunicated.

6. It is not lawful for monks to become groomsmen[2] for laymen — for what fellowship is there between dead ones and the living? For the monks are dead ones to the world; that one who dares shall not be pardoned.

7. It is not lawful for a monk to make for himself brothers and sisters of the cross instead of bodily brothers, but if one dares (to do so) he shall be foreign — out of the kinship of the brotherhood that is in the Messiah.

[18] *Syriac and Arabic Documents*, p. 71 ff.

[1] ܣܣܐ.

[2] Or: «Godparent».

8. It is not lawful for a monk to enter a banquet and to recline with those sitting at the tables — if (he does) not (observe this rule), he will be obliged to leave that banquet which has been prepared for the saints on high.

9. It is not lawful for a monk to stand outside and narrate vanities at the time of the prayer of the community of the eucharist; if he is a partaker he shall go in and weep over his sin; if (he does) not (partake) let him depart without guilt.

10. It is not lawful for a monk to participate in secular affairs[3], to take charge[4] in the village and to become a supervisor[5] of granaries and wine presses; if he dares (to do so), he is left by the Messiah who did not divide the possession of the brothers[6].

11. It is not lawful for a monk-priest — except for need — to serve in a town or a village because of bodily profit — he shall destroy the spiritual ones; that one who transgresses is condemned to judgement.

12. It is right for the monks to fast from food as well as from wine on Wednesday and Friday so that their fast shall be complete and their reward perfect.

13. It is right for the monks that they shall glow with mercy and the pity of atonement towards the poor and needy, and especially towards the strangers who live among them, in order that the Messiah shall confess goodness from them, that is, «I was a stranger and you have gathered me»[7], and again, «Forget not love of the strangers»[8].

14. It is right for the monks to clothe zeal in doctrine for the church their mother and to teach the mystery of faith from continuous reading as the holy fathers have commanded — they shall not become as soil that (produces) no fruits — in order that they shall not receive the curse and blessing of the sons of fire, as the apostle says[9].

15. It is right for the monks to fear God, so that they do not trespass and neglect any of the canons; also that they do not walk over much to (their) own destruction; that one who trespasses and dares — righteousness shall judge him.

[3] Or: «managements».
[4] Or: «office».
[5] Lit. «one who divides».
[6] Cf. Luke XII, 13f.
[7] Matth. XXV, 35.
[8] Heb. XIII, 2.
[9] Cf. I Cor. III, 13ff.

16. It is right for the abbot and the elders of the convents and holy monasteries that they shall be helpers to the cause[10] of the fear of God in these canons and paternal laws, and shall not despise them: therefore that one who keeps and strengthens his brothers — mercy and pity shall be unto him; that one who despises shall be excommunicated.

17. A monk who shall let out (funds) in usury and who bargains[11] in wine or wheat and the rest such as these — it is not right; that one who dares and trespasses, he shall be cursed — so be it!

18. It is also not lawful for monks to pray in church without a cowl except in case of necessity; that one who trespasses shall be condemned.

19. It is right that one shall become an abbot who has been chastely educated in a monastery and who knows the canons of the monks from reading and experience; he shall be a humble man, calm, self-controlled and a lover of men.

20. It is right for the *meparnsānē*[12] to be righteous men and upright — those who in knowledge and fairness of management serve their brothers in the fear of God and not because of worldly ambitions and impure honors.

21. It is right for a *rabbaitā* to be righteous, merciful, loving strangers, good (in) his eye and sweet (in) his word towards every man: he shall not be greedy in eating and drinking, nor fall under the judgement of the wicked ones.

22. The one that stands adversely against the abbot because he aligns himself with men in a party, if there does not exist a cause that is worthwhile — they have to depart from the monastery as adversaries or demonstrate[13] a new attitude[14].

23. (As for) a monk who hits his companion, it is not lawful (for him) to break fasting and naziritehood for three months; if that one who was struck returned the blow, he shall fast one month in naziritehood because of the blow which he delivered.

24. A monk who is a slanderer of his brothers and incites quarrels, shall cease or go from the monastery as an enemy of the peace since he has become a companion of that one, namely, the slanderer of God in paradise.

[10] Lit.: «word».
[11] Or: «repays».
[12] ܡܦܪ̈ܢܣܢܐ.
[13] Lit.: «give».
[14] Lit.: «faces».

25. A monk who drinks shall cease or so often as he drinks fast thirty days until the evening; but if he resists, he shall be with those whom Paul reckons outside the kingdom of God[15].

26. A monk who is sound in body and does not study — (for) doctrine is a light for men and life for the soul as it is written[16] — he shall be constant and practiced[17] in naziritehood and fasting.

2. The Canons Attributed to Rabbūlā

a. *The Source*

A cycle of rules under the title «The canons of Rabbūlā, bishop of Edessa for the monks»[1] has come down to us. Good fortune has preserved this interesting document but only in a single manuscript[2]. The precious source which has preserved this record is in Ms. Mus. Borgia 10[3], a record to which we are in debt for the collection with the largest number of monastic regulations.

Except for a minor section, this cycle of canons ascribed to Rabbūlā does not coincide with those which have previously been discussed. The first six canons appear in Rabbūlā's collection of canons though in different order. But the rest of the cycle contains canons which are entirely different and have no parallels elsewhere.

We know nothing about the origin and provenance of these rules. But one thing is certain: they justifiably bear the name of the Edessene bishop. The observation that, among the first six canons, there is one which prohibits economic growth[4], and that not in the adapted form we find elsewhere[5], tends to suggest that the whole cycle has not been cast in one piece, but that two disparate parts have been mechanically put together.

The entire spirit as well as the situation for which the main body of the canons was designed was different. This body of material presupposes an

15 Cf. I Cor. VI,10.
16 Cf. John I,4.
17 Or: «constant once again».

1 ܩܢܘ̈ܢܐ ܕܪܒܘܠܐ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܐܘܪܗܝ ܠܘܬ ܕܝܪ̈ܝܐ.
2 Vööbus, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen* I, 1,B, p. 350ff.
3 Fol. 106a-109a.
4 Can. 4.
5 Bar ʿEbraya, *Nomocanon*, ed. Bedjan, p. 110.

advanced stage of coenobitism, whereas this issue at Rabbūlā's time was still a matter of controversy. Moreover, these canons presuppose a scene in which the question whether there was any proper place for the reclusi in these alarmingly large communities quite naturally arose[6]. The same stage of development had also necessitated growth in the administration of the monastic communities. Further, among the first six rules, monks are forbidden to leave the monastery[7]; but the injunctions in the body of the canons say otherwise. One says that monks can go to the villages and towns — that is not prohibited — only they are not allowed to eat anywhere except at the place they are staying[8]. Another canon says the same, and forbids the passing of the night outside the monastery[9]. Finally, the last line on the folio makes the remark that there are thirty-four canons altogether. There must be something wrong about this, for though the text does not offer an enumeration, there seem to be more canons than is stated. Thus the two parts of the canons have been brought together by force, something unnatural to either of them. Somehow the canons of Rabbūlā must have been mixed up with another set, perhaps a codex containing canonical materials from which a leaf has been lost, thus facilitating the merger of two disparate bodies of text — a phenomenon well known to those who deal with manuscripts[10]. Accordingly, the obvious contradictions find their natural explanation on this assumption.

The script of the manuscript does not help us to determine how far back the origin of this cycle may be traced[11]. Some very general observations can, however, be made. If the remarkable principle expressed in the canons — to safeguard the particular position of those in extraordinary chastisement and the forms of mortification[12] — serve as a guide, one is inclined to place the origin of these canons during the

6 Can. 30.
7 Can. 1.
8 Can. 29.
9 Can. 13.
10 Rabbūlā's name could very easily be added to this concluding remark by a careless scribe who did not check the situation diligently.
11 The manuscript which has preserved the canons is relatively young. A remark by the copyist says that the codex was written in the year 1895 A. Gr., i.e. 1583/4 A. D.
12 Can. 30, indeed, seems to offer a significant hint. The rule that the recluses cannot be in a large monastery, seems to be an echo of the older standards with isolated extraordinary forms of mortification, which we find in the rules of Rabbūlā. Later the rigorous standards were abandoned.

period of blossoming. The impression given by the other canons also seem to favor this conclusion.

The text of this cycle of canons has been edited[13] twice[14].

b. *The Canons*

The Canons of Rabbūlā, bishop of Edessa for the Monks

1. The brother-monks shall not enter the villages except only the *sāʿūrē*[1] of the monastery: and they shall observe the order of chastity.

2. The *sāʿūrā* who enters a village or a town, shall not go around to the guest houses and pass the night with the seculars, but in a church or a monastery that is nearby.

3. Monks shall not drink wine so that they will not blaspheme and monks shall guard themselves constantly (so) that they do not buy wine and drink.

4. Monks shall not possess the goods of sheep and goats or of horses, or other animals, except for a donkey or one yoke of oxen — and then (only) those who seed something for themselves and who have need of them.

5. Books which are outside the faith of the church shall not be in the monasteries.

6. They shall receive strangers kindly and shall not close the door in the face of one of the brothers.

7. No one of the brothers shall buy or sell anything without the command of the abbot, and the three brothers who are next to him (in rank).

8. No one can give anything to someone without (consent of the) abbot except (for) three loaves of bread.

9. No one who lives in the monastery shall steal anything, and if it is detected that he steals, he shall be reduced in his rank by fifteen brothers (below) him; if that one is a priest, he shall be the last of the priests; if that one is (already) the last of the priests, he shall receive the canon (of punishment) for three years; and if it is his habit to steal, he shall leave the monastery in order that the whole body of the brotherhood not be corrupted.

10. No one shall raise his hand against his companion; the one who

[13] Mounayer, «Canons relatifs aux moines», p. 406ff.
[14] *Syriac and Arabic Documents*, ed. Vööbus, p. 80ff.
[1] ܣܥܘܪ̈ܐ.

dares (to do so) and beats his companion, shall be sent (from his rank to that of) the twelfth of the brothers; the one who mocks and jokes[2] and causes strife, shall be sent (from his rank to that of) the sixtieth of the brothers.

11. No one shall have a meal outside the coenobium of the community (of monks), except the sick ones.

12. No one shall eat during the day without the blessing of the abbot.

13. No one shall pass the night outside the monastery except the *sāʿūrē*.

14. The one who is detected in adultery shall not remain in the monastery, unless he turns from his sin and accepts the canon (of punishment), and is no (longer) found in this habit; it is not right that the testimony of only one be accepted (as sufficient to accuse a brother in this matter).

15. A monk who dwells in the monastery shall not lend anything on interest, even if he has something from his own resources.

16. Those who direct the monastery shall not act by giving favor[3].

17. No one shall enter the garden and take something from it (without the permission of) those who have been appointed over it.

18. No one shall eat with a relative if he comes to the monastery outside the scheduled time, and without the *būrktā*[4] of the abbot.

19. No monk shall accompany his companion and pass over the threshold of the gate (of the monastery) without (the permission) of the abbot.

20. No one shall go (out) for the personal affair or to his home without (the permission of) the abbot.

21. A brother — a novice who is to become a monk in three years — shall not go out of the monastery without (the permission of) the abbot.

22. No one shall depart from the canon (of punishment) that the abbot has imposed on him, except in (case of) sickness.

23. Each year in the months of Ilūl[5], the full moon, the eucharist shall be celebrated[6], and a vigil and worship service and a feast, and the abbot shall distribute the ordinances of the monastery, and in love shall

[2] Lit.: «and is tale-telling».
[3] Lit.: «accepting faces».
[4] ܒܘܪܟܬܐ.
[5] September.
[6] Lit.: «made».

arrange[7] the weeks for the brothers in order that fighting and harm between themselves may not occur.

24. An abbot shall not neglect the worship service and the *būrkē*[8].

25. No one shall talk during the worship service and prayer — not even the abbot — and not at the meal-table, without necessity.

26. No one shall neglect prayer.

27. No monk shall eat with women at all, by no means with his mother or his sister.

28. Monks shall not go to the banquet or feast nor shall a monk become a groomsman or a godfather at baptism for the seculars.

29. A monk, if he enters a town or a village, shall not eat except in that house where he stays, and he shall not go out to roam on the streets and in the houses because of his stomach, (and thus) debase his chaste garment.

30. No recluse[9] shall be in the monastery of a large convent, nor shall (there) be in it two manners[10] (of monastic life).

31. No one who has something (of the possessions) from his family shall claim[11] that this is his own or revile the brothers because he had to give it to the monastery, or shall have more authority over it than of the whole coenobium.

32. No one, if he knows a certain craft (or profession) shall seek for himself the honor of it, more than that (one) who does not know this; and if he is wise and learned he shall not exalt himself above those who are weaker in knowledge than he, but he shall do everything for God's glory and shall take refuge in Him all the time.

33. No person shall become *sāʿūrē* of the monks except righteous ones, true, chaste and tested, pleasing in their manners and not greedy for anything.

34. But the abbot shall take care of the service of the community and of the good order of the brotherhood; and those who (stand in their rank) next to him, shall take care of the sustenance of everything (so) that the monastery may not lack in anything.

35. The abbot and those three who are with him, shall manage the

[7] Lit.: «make».

[8] ܒܘܪ̈ܟܐ.

[9] ܚܒܝܫܐ.

[10] σχῆμα.

[11] Lit.: «say».

expense and income[12], and every affair of the community; whether (it produces) sins or righteousness that will come (to light) afterwards[13].

36. No one who lives in the monastery shall give anything of the properties of the monastery to his relatives; the opulence of the monastery is a grace of our Lord; also what he gives away and distributes will be of harm to himself and to his relatives.

We have written these canons for your honor about the ordinances and canons of the monastery on the coenobitic life.

Here end the canons of the monks, 36 (in numbers), those of Rabbūlā.

3. The Canons for the Monks in Persia

a. *The Sources*

There exists a cycle of canons of anonymous origin called the canons of the «Persians». In their original cast, they have not come down to us, but have survived only in the form which appears in the codification work of Bar ʿEbrāyā[1]. Bar ʿEbrāyā introduces these rules as the canons of the «Persians»[2] and that is the only direct information we possess about this cycle. Nothing has been preserved about origin and background in the canons themselves — the introduction which may have contained information has not been included by Bar ʿEbrāyā into this corpus. In addition, all attempts to find further data in other related literary sources have failed.

The first observation we can make is this, that these canons are not comprised only of injunctions to the monks. The collection embraces a larger area[3]. This gives us some clues about the origin of these norms. They were obviously not regulations established by a local monastic community — in its present form — nor by a group of monasteries. Evidently these canons were brought into being by the action of

[12] Or: «commercial dealings»; lit.: «receiving».

[13] Lit.: «after these».

[1] *Nomocanon* VII, 10.

[2] ܦܪ̈ܣܝܐ is the only word that marks this new section.

[3] The greater part of it regulates ecclesiastical affairs, answers questions with regard to the consecration of the eucharist, deals with matters concerning the service of the clergy, and treats various other issues of church practice, *Nomocanon*, p. 44, 57, 64, 70, 73f., 96, 101.

ecclesiastical authorities, and in the nature of the case, there were made normative for monasteries over a larger area.

Further, the canons bear within them unmistakable indications that they belong to the Monophysite faction of monasticism in Persia. A clear hint, that points to Persian territory, is given in connection with the question of exempt monasteries[4], the jurisdiction of which was taken from the hands of the local bishops and reserved for «the patriarch in the Occident and the Catholicos in the Orient». This remark speaks for itself. The seat of the highest spiritual leader of this group was regarded as being in the West, i.e. the patriarch in Antioch. After him, the «Catholicos in the Orient» obviously the Metropolitan of Tagrit[5].

The text of the canons[6] rests on a number of codices[7]. The company of known manuscripts has been increased[8] by the new documents which have emerged in the Syrian Orient[9].

b. *The Canons*

(The Canons) of the Persians

(1) Bishops shall not rule over the monasteries in which a patriarch or a catholicos is buried, but the patriarch in the West and the catholicos in the East.

(2) The abbot, when he examines the brothers, shall put each in an office[1] which is suitable for him.

(3) A *rabbaitā* shall not be greedy in eating or drinking and he shall honor more the brothers who labor more.

(4) A doorkeeper shall be quiet (gentle) and humble and not angry; and he shall receive no deposit[2] from anyone.

[4] Can. 1.

[5] About this seat see *Histoire de Mār Ahoudemmeh*, p. 15ff. and also DENḤA, *Histoire de Marouta métropolitain de Tagrit*, p. 61ff.

[6] The oldest are: Ms. Berlin Orient. Pet. I,23, fol. 54a-55a, of the year 1355/6 A.D., and Ms. Laur. Med. Orient 294, fol. 39b-40a, of the year 1357 A.D.

[7] The following two manuscripts come from the 15th cent.: Ms. Paris Syr. 226, fol. 51a-52a, of the year 1487/8, and Ms. Oxford. Hunt. I, fol. 275b-276a, of the year 1499. Other manuscripts are younger. See *Syriac and Arabic Documents*, ed. VÖÖBUS, p. 88.

[8] Ms. Šarfeh Syr. 4/4, fol. 51a-51b, of the 15th cent. and Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 460, fol. 51a-51b, of the 15th cent.

[9] Ms. Jerusalem Mark 207 and 208, the latter being written in 1291 A.D. Ms. Mosul Orth. 40 was written in 1482/3 A.D. Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 322 comes from the same century; others are younger: Ms. Mardin Orth. 316 and 317, see VÖÖBUS, *Syriac Manuscripts*. Ms. Mār Mattai 2 and 19. Ms. Qarṭāmīn, a folio volume, has no signature.

[1] Lit.: «service».

[2] ܓܘܠܬܐ.

(5) A *sāʿūrā*[3] of the monastery shall not take[4] more for himself than that which has been set apart for him by the abbot; and he shall bridle his desires with the seculars.

(6) A monk who sins shall be reproved, and up to two times it shall be forgiven him; on the third occasion he shall be expelled.

(7) A monk who is not prepared[5] for the night in the service, shall not sit at the table with the brothers.

(8) Brothers shall sleep on mats and carpets, the abbot and the weak ones in beds since they do not loosen their girdles nor put off (their clothes).

(9) A monk who serves the priesthood in a church of a town or that of a village, shall put on white garments over his monastic *ʾeskīmā*[6] in order that monasticism may not become contemptible in the world.

(10) A priest or a deacon who wants to put on (the monastic garment) shall first begin by serving for one year in the sanctuary[7] and then he shall put on (the garment); if he is a brother, the abbot shall assign him to another service for a year before he shall put on (the garment).

(11) When a monk ceases from manual work[8], he shall meditate on the divine books.

(12) During the nights of the Saturdays, if this be possible, the brothers shall stay in the service since the evening[9].

(13) While the brothers dine, a homily[10] shall be red in order that with the body the soul, too, might be nourished.

(14) Brothers shall not go outside the monastery without the order of the abbot; and for three years before the donning of (the monastic garment) they cannot go out even if the abbot (so) orders.

(15) A monk shall take care of the correction of himself only, and not that of his brothers.

(16) An abbot, however, and a *mešablānā*[11] shall take care of themselves and of the brothers.

[3] ܣܥܘܪܐ.

[4] Lit.: «possess».

[5] Ms. Vatican Syr. 358 addes here: «for God».

[6] σχῆμα.

[7] Lit.: «apse». The Syriac terms is ܩܢܟܐ.

[8] Lit.: «of hands».

[9] Ms. Šarfeh Syr. 4/4 places this canon on the margin.

[10] ܬܘܪܓܡܐ.

[11] ܡܫܒܠܢܐ.

(17) A monk cannot work at something of his own so long as he is in the service of the community.

(18) A monk shall not pass the night in the cell of his fellow monk; seculars who appear[12] shall pass the night in the community[13].

(19) A monk shall not inherit from his secular family member[14] except if something shall be set apart for him.

(20) An abbot shall not give the tonsure rashly to a secular except he has been tested for a year.

(21) An abbot who directs (the monastery) well, shall not be changed (in office).

(22) A monk who knows only one psalm, shall repeat the same in all the prayers.

(23) A monk who eats meat shall be punished as one who fornicates.

(24) If a monk wants to pray in his cell, this shall be allowed him only on ordinary days, and not on feasts and Sundays[15].

(25) A monk who goes to the town because of study shall dwell in the church and shall not neglect fasting and prayers; if he is poor, he shall work in a profession that is not contemptible.

(26) A monk, however, shall never at all enter a convent of nuns[16].

4. Anonymous Canons for the Monks

a. *The Sources*

A cycle of canons bears the title: «The canons which are fitting for those who have dressed the holy schema»[1]. Under this title the canons appear in Ms. Vatican Syr. 58[2]. This cycle bears a more elaborate title in another codex which comes from the Orient, namely Ms. Mardin Orth. 157[3] which comes from the same century[4]: «The canons which are

[12] Lit.: «are present».
[13] Or: «in the interior of the monastery».
[14] ܒܪ ܥܠܡܐ.
[15] Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 460 transposes can. 25 and 26.
[16] Lit.: «sisters».

[1] ܩܢܘܢܐ ܕܘܢܩܝܢ ܠܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܠܒܫܝܢ ܐܣܟܝܡܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ.
[2] Fol. 107b; the codex is of the year 1584/6 A.D., Assemani, *Catalogus* II, p. 354f.
[3] Fol. 101a-101b.
[4] Vööbus, *Syriac Manuscripts*.

being kept in care, earnestness, great watchfulness and diligence by those who bear our garment — this holy schema of the angelic monasticism»[5]. It is a matter for rejoicing that quite a company of unknown manuscripts has emerged[6] as a result of a search in the Syrian Orient, enriching the few which were known in the west[7].

The text of this cycle has been edited[8].

In several respects this cycle of rules is quite unique among this genre of literature[9]. First, it is a systematically arranged collection which treats the duties within the walls of the cells and gives norms for the daily routine. It stands out by virtue of its limited scope. Secondly, this cycle obviously has originated in a monastic community. Indications of this are unmistakable. The rule which deals with genuflection, makes it clear that here we have to do with the monks in the monastic community. For here it is said that besides a fixed number of genuflections there are those connected with the prayer hours which take place «in the assembly of the community»[10]. The same observation is corroborated by another rule which indicates that these monks in the cells also had a part in the service of the community as priests[11]. Finally, this cycle seems to constitute a separate segment in a larger reglementation of the monastic community[12].

We are at a complete loss when we come to the question of the origin of this source. The rules have been preserved as anonymous. There is no information in the prescript and postscript. And from injunctions of this sort, we cannot expect to find criteria for historical purposes. Wherever it originated, however, it is clear that this cycle of rules has moved out of the boundaries of this unknown monastery and become a part of the canonical literature where it has taken its place along with other canonical texts.

[5] ܩܢܘܢܐ ܕܡܬܛܪܝܢ ܒܚܦܝܛܘܬܐ ܡܢ ܒܢܛܝܪܘܬܐ ܘܒܚܦܝܛܘܬܐ ܘܒܙܗܝܪܘܬܐ ܝܬܝܪܬܐ ܘܒܫܩܝܠܘܬܐ ܡܢ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܠܒܝܫܝܢ ܠܐܣܟܝܡܐ ܗܢܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܕܝܪܝܘܬܐ ܡܠܐܟܝܬܐ.
[6] Šarfeh Patr. 302, fol. 38a, of the year 1699 A.D.; Ms. Mosul Orth. 209, fol. 40b-41a; Ms. Mardin. Orth. 422, fol. 1b.
[7] Ms. Harvard Har. 36, fol. 1b-2a, of the year 1796/7 A.D., Goshen-Gottstein, *Syriac Manuscripts*, p. 57.
[8] *Syriac and Arabic Documents*, ed. Vööbus, p. 106ff.
[9] Vööbus, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen*, I, 1,B, p. 370ff.
[10] Can. 6.
[11] Can. 12.
[12] The conclusion clearly refers to the existence of these norms when it speaks of «the rest of the virtues — those which the order of the angelic garment demands».

b. *The Canons*

Canons which are observed in care, earnestness, great watchfulness, and diligence by those who approach our dress, this holy and angelic garment[1] of monasticism.

1. Before all things it is right for these who dress in this holy and angelic garment of our father, blessed Aba Antonios, that they shall become like him in his asceticism and his humility.
2. That they shall not satisfy themselves either with bread or with water, and also not by sleep.
3. He shall not speak to his side and also not to his back, but fittingly, his face shall look towards the East.
4. He shall lean against a wall whenever he sleeps; or shall make for himself a seat (or a chair) of stones or of wood[2] and shall rest upon it.
5. Whensoever he sits or stands or does some work, he shall first make[3] three *būrkē*.
6. Every day he shall complete three hundred determined *būrkē* — these besides the seven prayer (hours) which are fixed in the assembly of the community.
7. Fasting is until the ninth hour, if possible, during the (whole) evening continuously[4].
8. But nazaritehood and asceticism[5] (shall be according to) the ability of his strength.
9. (As far as) he can, he shall not eat his bread except alone.
10. There (shall be) no going and coming to his private (cell) along with one or two, and (particularly) not continually, except in time of necessity.
11. By no means shall he ever eat something with a woman — not with his mother nor with his sister.
12. If that (monk) is a priest he shall not give the eucharist to women, nor to one who does not understand[6] his deeds and works.

These, our beloved brother, observe — that you may not be judged by

[1] σχῆμα.
[2] The reference to «wood» is absent in Ms. Vatican Syr. 58, fol. 107b.
[3] Lit.: «put».
[4] The last part in this canon is absent in Ms. Vatican Syr. 58, fol. 107b.
[5] ܘܢܙܝܪܘܬܐ.
[6] Lit.: «know».

God — with the rest of other virtues, those which the order[7] of this angelic garment[8] demands.

[7] ܛܟܣܐ, τάξις.
[8] σχῆμα.

XI. THE PERIOD OF THE ISLAMIC INVASION

1. Introduction

An entirely new epoch was presaged for Christianity in the east with the Islamic invasion. The political and religious conditions in Syria, Mesopotamia and Persia were completely upset by this earth-shaking event. In the almost unknown desert of Arabia, a power destined to inherit the cultural world of the Orient exploded onto the scene. The new religion of Islam, within an incredible short time, became a political factor evolving into the empire of the caliphs.

In connection with the expansion of Arab power, it is certainly a mistake to assume that Muhammad had nothing to do with its development[1] and that his aspirations in this respect were limited. His ambitions must be viewed from the perspective of his call, one which constantly saw the horizon of his mission moving forward towards a universalistic goal[2].

The expansion was so rapid that it has not been equalled. Both Byzantium and Persia turned out to be vulnerable and feeble in the face of the unexpected rise of power from the desert. Insofar as Byzantium is concerned, it is no surprise that its eastern provinces fell so quikly, a ripe fruit on the lap of the Arabs. The regime had fully prepared the soil for that consequence. Forever brutal against those who were defenseless, tireless in the persecution of people because of their religious convictions, the scales fell from the eyes of the potentates when they were forced to recognize that the measures they had prosecuted in the interest of ecclesiastical quarrels had only served the purpose of preparing the masses in the eastern provinces for the invaders. The weakness of Persia which had been active and vigorous is more striking, although the invaders here met stronger resistance. As opposed to the pace of conquest in Syria and Mesopotamia, the annexation of Persia could not

[1] CAETANI, *Annali dell' Islam* V, p. 323f.

[2] The term «all mankind», as the goal of the mission of Islam is clearly brought out in Sure I,1; VI,160; XXXIV,27; when Sure XXI,107 and LXVIII,52 speak of «all creatures» the meaning must be the same.

take place that easily and, indeed, even after the annexation, considerable time was needed to suppress the explosions of resistance[3].

It falls outside the purpose of this volume to trace in detail the course of these breathtaking happenings. It is sufficient to mention in brief the main steps in these epoch-making events.

When Abu Bakr gave the order to his armies to start the move across the boundaries, a signal was given for spectacular conquests in the history of wars. In the year 634, the Arab armies invaded Syria, soon preparing for the fatal blow to the forces of Byzantium. In Syria among outstanding towns one of the first to capitulate to the invaders was Boṣra, a center of the Ghassanid state. The terms were mild: the annual payment of one dinar by every adult male and one *jarīb* of wheat[4]. Damascus fell in the year 635. The battle of Yarmuk[5] in the following year brought the fatal blow to the forces of Heraclios and finally decided the fate of Syria. Antioch fell in 636. Even earlier, the forces of Abu Bakr, which operated independently, had crossed the boundaries of Persia. In Iraq, the initial case of success was the capitulation of Ḥira, the strongly fortified capital of the Lakhmids, inhabited by Christian Arabs. The demand of Khālid ibn al-Walīd that they were to accept Islam was rejected and the population remained loyal to its Christian faith, and as a result, it was willing to pay the tribute[6]. In 633, the barrier constituted by the Lakhmid Arabs was broken[7]. After their catastrophic defeat, the remnants of the Persian court could only abide in Holwān for a short while[8] — but the lot had been cast and the power of the victors there secured for centuries.

First of all, it is necessary to clarify certain basic premises. There has been a wide prejudice that the period beginning with the Islamic invasion must be regarded as one in which the decline of the Christian culture in these lands was well advanced. According to this view, from the moment Syrian Christianity had to submit itself to the Arab invaders, one must reckon with the end of the floration of Christian culture and the beginning of its demise. Confirmation for this view has been seen in certain archaelogical phenomena. De Vogüé received the impression

[3] BALĀDHURĪ, *Futuḥ al-buldān* ed. DE GOEJE, p. 301ff.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 112f.

[5] SEBEOS, *Histoire d'Héraclius*, tr. MACLER, p. 98ff.

[6] ṬABARĪ, *Ta'rīkh ar-rusul*, ed. DE GOEJE I, p. 2041.

[7] Ḥīra changed hands twice, and finally fell into Arab hands in 635.

[8] The main town, Istakhr, was conquered in 649/50.

from the ruins of the monasteries and churches in Syria that these must all have been abandoned as a result of a great catastrophe. According to him, these phenomena can best be explained in the light of the calamities caused by the Arab invasion[9]. Seen from this perspective, the Arab invasion not only turned the churches and monasteries into ruins but also destroyed Christian life and culture in such a way that no new life could rise from these ruins.

We do not need to look long in this direction. This view of the Islamic invasion as a great catastrophe reaches back to the contemporary Byzantine historians who followed these epoch-making events with shock and horror and were so jolted by the victories of the Arabs that they believed the end of the world to be at hand. These contemporary feelings and sentiments are clearly reflected, for example, in a letter written by Sophronios to Sergios and Honorios[10]. On this question the Byzantine authorities cannot be authoritative. It would be too much to expect of these Byzantine history writers, namely, that they would have been able to assess the catastrophes which overtook them more objectively. Judging from the documents, one must conclude that the Islamic invasion cannot be assessed as something which was utterly catastrophic. The destruction and ruins to be seen in the archaeological remains in Syria which have been associated with the Islamic invasion must have been reduced to rubble at an earlier point in time. The cause of the massive ruins must be sought for and located in various Persian incursions and raids and military expeditions. Indeed, one may view the whole of the sixth century only as a preparation for the real hurricane from Persia which broke out at the beginning of the seventh century. These forays and incidents enveloped much in its vortex of destruction which these areas could not recuperate.

For a balanced assessment of the situation, it is necessary to gain some clarity about the aims of the Arabs in their invasion. It is obvious that it makes an immense difference if the invasion was intended to support a fanatical religious war of conquest or if it was an undertaking which had other objectives.

The true purpose of the Islamic invasion has found expression by Muhammad himself in the Quran. Here the new prophet speaks in concrete terms. He has laid down a program which his generals were to

[9] *Syrie centrale, architecture civile et religieuse*, p. 9.

[10] *Oratio Sophronii in Christi Salvatoris natalitia*, ed. USENER, p. 500ff.

materialize: to battle against those who possess sacred books but who do not recognize the true religion and to continue the battle until they were completely subjugated and had agreed to pay tribute[11]. As these injuctions show, the real purpose of the battles and the conquest was not the compulsion to force the subjugated people to change their religion and to embrace Islam, but rather to impose upon them the tribute. From the standpoint of the Quran, the Islamic invasion must be regarded not so much as a religious but as an economic-political undertaking. Accordingly, the Arabs did not invade the Syrian, Mesopotamian and Persian territories as fanatic conquerors with sword and fire to prepare the way for the acceptance of Islam, as the crusaders were to do during the Middle Ages for their religion. Of course, it can be taken for granted that in these military operations religion could not be entirely left out. When Abu Yūsaf Yaʿqūb says that the prophet never fought against any group without appealing to them to receive Islam[12], it is no doubt trustworthy. ʿUmar, in a letter sent to a commander, orders him to put the Mesopotamian Christians before the alternative of embracing Islam or of accepting the tribute[13]. This appeal was formal; its aim was, however, above all, economic and political. Religion remained a completely internal matter to be decided by the inhabitants themselves. Judging the invasion of the Arabs from this angle, we cannot forget that the real object of the conquest was not Christianity but the states of Byzantium and Persia.

That this was the main principle, is shown also by the fact that not only was the conquest carried out in accord with it; that which happened in the conquered territories brought only a change in the power politics, and that only at the highest level. It also fell on the shoulders of ʿUmar to devise a plan for the provisional administration of the conquered lands. It is marked, in fact, by simplicity and practicality according to the same basic principle for conquest. The actual work of administration was continued in the old way and by the same personnel. The same was the case with regard to the financial apparatus[14]. All this illustrates the real aim of the conquest delineated in the Quran.

[11] «Fight against those who do not believe in God, nor in the last day, do not forbid what God and His Apostle forbid, nor practise the true religion, from among those who have been given the Book, until they pay the *jizya* out of hand, being submissive», Sure Ix,29.

[12] YAʿQOUB, *Le livre de l'impôt foncier*, tr. FAGNAN, p. 295.

[13] ṬABARĪ, *Ta'rīkh ar-rusul* I, V, p. 2506.

[14] The financial apparatus operated by the Byzantine, Jewish and Persian officials which was conducted in Greek and Persian respectively continued for many years.

2. The Conquest

The conquest of the whole of Syria and Iraq fell upon the shoulders of the second chalif, ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb.

In the light of what has already been said, we can see why «The people of the book»[1] were favorably dealt in the course of the military operations[2] — with the exception of Christian Arabs who were regarded in a special category from the very beginning[3]. The attitude with which the Christians were greeted on their first confrontations with the Arab intruders was reasonably favorable. That which is reflected in their feelings and sentiments demonstrates a disposition very different from that of Sophronios; the majority of these Christians took the opposite view. To the Monophysites in Syria and Mesopotamia, the Arab intruders even appeared as liberators who were bringing all the harassments and vexations which had troubled them for such a long time to an end. — Michael Syrus, for example, has used sources which speak with deep bitterness of the terror of Byzantium which had mercilessly ravaged the monasteries and churches of the Monophysites; these sources even suggest that the hand of providence brought the Arabs from the south[4] as liberators[5]. The similar sentiments to the same effect, namely, that the God of vengeance had delivered the suffering Christian people from the cruelties of the Byzantines by means of the Arabs also is to be seen in the chronicle of Bar ʿEbrāyā[6]. Indeed, even among the East Syrians, it is clear that such feelings were not entirely absent. Upon reading the final part of an anonymous Nestorian chronicle, one is left with the impression that also among Nestorian circles there were many who welcomed the Arabs as rescuers from the Persian regime[7].

Instructive episodes are to be found in such sources which tell that in many places Christians favored he Arab invasion, and gave active help[8].

[1] This category included the Christians, Jews, Sabians and Magians.

[2] Idolatry had to be eradicated. Idolaters were put before the choice of the acceptance of Islam or to become slaves or were put to death.

[3] The Christian Arabs constitued a special category: they had to pay a double *zakāt* instead of a tribute. Occasionally they had to suffer very heavily. A head of the Taghlib tribe was cruelly tortured since he refused to forsake his religion.

[4] *Chronique*, éd. Chabot II, p. 412f.

[5] *Chronicon ad ann. 1234 pert.*, ed. Chabot I, p. 236f.

[6] *Chronicon eccl.*, ed. Abbeloos-Lamy II, col. 90.

[7] *Die von Guidi herausgegebene syrische Chronik*, p. 40.

[8] For instance in Damascus a certain deacon Jōḥannān appeared as an intermediary; *Chronicon ad ann. 1234 pert.*, ed. Chabot I, p. 248.

One episode recorded in Balādhurī gives us an insight into the feelings of the Christians. When the Byzantines embarked upon a counterattack, Abu ʿUbaida ordered the return of the tribute collected from Emesa and other towns to them in view of the fact that the battle against the Byzantines was inevitable — should the Arabs win, he would come back to exact the tribute; but should the Byzantines be victorious, the tribute would remain with the inhabitants and they would be absolved of the oath given to the Arabs. The inhabitants responded by indicating that they preferred the rule of the Arabs to oppression and tyranny: «We very much prefer your government and justice to the oppression and injustice of our former rulers». After the victory at Yarmuk, the Arabs returned and Balādhurī says that the inhabitants opened the gates of the town and went out to meet the victorious Arabs with songs and music and received them with jubilation[9]. Nor does this stem only from the Arab sources. A similar episode is also recorded in an anonymous chronicle in Syriac[10].

Other episodes which show that the Arabs knew how to make themselves agreeable and pleasing, and how to awaken confidence in them through their humane attitude are on record. ʿUmar's goodheartedness and magnanimity were widely known[11]. Balādhurī speaks of ʿUmar's care of and support for poor Christians needing foodstuffs and money[12]. And if such a humane attitude was lacking or deficient, diplomatic skill could activate action to put the invaders into a favorable light. Indeed, it did not require much skill to realize the great advantage of such a friendly attitude. Since Mesopotamia, with its many towns and fortresses, also had to be conquered, it was certainly prudent policy on the part of the Arabs to admonish their troops to proceed with due care and caution to preserve their good reputation in order to facilitate the conquest and prepare a way for them[13]. There certainly is much truth in the report given by Wakidi that the just rule and the righteous administration of the Arabs won the hearts of the people[14].

This and more tended to persuade many towns and settlements to capitulate to the Arabs. While the inhabitants of Aleppo fled and Abu

[9] Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al buldān*, p. 137.

[10] *Chronicon ad ann. 1234 pert.* I, p. 248f.

[11] As-Suyuti, *History of the Caliphs*, tr. Jarret, p. 81; cf. Abou Yousof Ya'qoub, *Le livre de l'impôt foncier*, p. 194.

[12] *Liber expugnationis regionum*, tr. Rescher, p. 131.

[13] Wakidi, *Kitab al Magheri*, tr. Wellhausen, p. 34.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 91.

ʿUbaida could not find anyone left behind inasmuch as all of them had sought shelter in Antioch — the inhabitants furthermore refused to return before a treaty was made with the new potentates. The treaty with the Christians of Aleppo stipulated payment of tribute by the inhabitants in return for which they were to receive security for themselves and their children, the wall of the town as well as the town itself, its religious buildings, houses and the fortress. This treaty also requires the Christians to reserve a lot in the town for a mosque[15]. This what happened in Aleppo constitutes an intermezzo which deviates from the mainline. In the light of the overall picture of the conquests, the facts point in a different direction. We see that the inhabitants of many towns and settlements, due to their generally favorable attitude toward the Arabs, peacefully opened their gates. The capitulation of Damascus serves as a good example. The siege of Damascus was prolonged. Its surrender did not take place until three months had elapsed, in the year 635. The account given by Balādhurī[16] is most instructive. In the story of its capitulation, the bishop and the abbot of a monastery located near the eastern gate played a decisive role. The Arab commander had taken up his residence in this monastery where dealings were made with the bishop. One day he appeared on the wall and conveyed a message to the Arab commander: «Come to an understanding with me about this city»[17]. He offered vital services to the Arabs which led to the capitulation of the town[18].

In the year 637, practically the whole of Syria fell into Arab hands.

That which happened in Syria also happened in Mesopotamia and in much the same way. Among the many towns in which inhabitants capitulated, Edessa must be included.

The sources leave us with a clear picture about the capitulation of Edessa. The Arabs encountered no resistance from the inhabitants in the villages and the country folk welcomed the invaders. However, the town itself was prepared for a long siege since the governor and military forces of Byzantium were present. When during this siege the governor and

[15] IBN ACH-CHINNA, *Les perles choisies*, tr. SAUVAGET I, p. 19f.

[16] *Futūḥ al buldān*, p. 121f.

[17] The bishop secretly made a covenant with the Arab commander during the siege of the town.

[18] Very important information was given to the Arab commander Khālid ibn al-Walīd regarding a suitable time and place for entering the town. Using the help given by the community of the monastery, the commander could obtain ladders, climb the wall and capture this particular gate, which was entirely unguarded, and to open it.

most of the Greeks managed to escape, the native inhabitants who remained in the town offered to surrender on the terms which had earlier been proposed. Its inhabitants told the Arabs that they rather loved their government and justice more than the oppression and injustice which they, until then, had to endure at the hands of the Byzantines[19].

The situation in Persia[20] was little different[21]. The decisive victory over the Persians was won by Saʿd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ at al-Qādisiyyah in the year 637. This victory opened the whole of the fertile lowland of Iraq to the conquerers. This is not the place to go into the details of the conquest of Persia. Let it suffice here to state that the inhabitants of the towns and villages, both Syrian and Arab Christians, were happy to become liberated from the oppression of the Persians — just as the inhabitants in the towns and villages in Syria and Mesopotamia had been pleased to be rid of the yoke of Byzantium.

In the formation of such an attitude on the part of the people, one factor played an important role. It had to do with the future — namely the protection of the inhabitants.

In this respect, Muhammad himself provided an example of the way to deal with the Christians. In connection with the Christians of Nağrān[22], he had a written guarantee issued[23], upon payment of tribute, to the effect that they would receive protection for their religion, and that no bishop, monk or *wāqif* would be hindered from carrying out his religious duties[24]. During the time of ʿUmar, the acute problems which had

[19] BALĀDHURĪ, *Futūḥ al buldān*, p. 174f.

[20] ṬABARĪ, *Taʾrīkh ar-rusul* I, p. 2254.

[21] In the deputation among others and besides the Persian governor there appeared one with the name ʿAbd al Masīḥ, is a Christian name.

[22] 631 A. D. when Khālid ibn al-Walīd was sent by Muhammad to call the Christians in Nağrān to Islam carrying the threat of war in case of their refusal. However, only some accepted Islam. A delegation was sent to Muhammad and an agreement was then worked out «until God comes with his command», IBN HISHAM, p. 958ff.

[23] «The people of Nağrān and their dependants enjoy the protection of God and Muhammad for their life, their religion, their land, and property, for their churches and the practice of their religion — no bishop or monk or *wāqif* will be forced to give up his position — and for all that is in their hand, little or much, provided it be not the product of usury or blood money from heathen times».

[24] However, Muhammad broke the promises he had given to these Christians and ordered that «there shall be no other faiths other than Islam» within the Arabian peninsula. ʿUmar did expel the Christians from Nağrān. However, provision had been made for them, they were offered land in exchange in Syria or Iraq according to their choice. The majority of these Christians settled down in the vicinity of Kufa. BALĀDHURĪ, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, p. 66.

emerged during the course of the conquest were settled quite pragmatically, using the treaty with Nağrān as a precedent.

In Damascus, as we have already seen, the bishop, who had entered into secret negotiations with the Arab commander, obtained from him the following treaty: «This is what Khālid ibn al-Walīd grants to the people of Damascus: when he enters it he will give them security for their lives and goods and churches; the wall of the city will not be destroyed and none of their houses will be occupied; for this they have the covenant of God, the pledge of the apostle of God and of the caliphs and the believers; no molestation will be offered them if they pay the *jizya*»[25].

The people of Ḥimṣ (Emesa) capitulated by the treaty similar to the treaty made with Damascus[26].

The case of Edessa is typical. Edessa capitulated on the basis of the same condition: the cathedral, its surroundings and its property was guaranteed, with the exception that no new churches were to be built and that the inhabitants were obliged to give assistance to the Arab against their enemies[27].

Protection for monks, their monasteries and their lives in the cells and hermitages occasionally was included in the treaties made by the Arabs — following the prototype in Nağrān. As was already said, in the treaty with the Christians in Nağrān, it was stated that no monk was to be driven out of his rank nor his activities hindered[28]. In the treaties with Bishop Sophronios of Jerusalem monks and nuns wherever they may be are included among the clerics and are to receive a full security for their activities from the Arabs[29]. Thus according to the treaties full freedom was given the ascetics, monks and hermits as well as for the continuation of life in the monasteries.

[25] BALĀDHURĪ, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, p. 121. Wāqidī says that he had actually seen this document. He also offers an explanation why the date of this document is several months later than the capitulation of Damascus. He says that when the document was written it had no date. Later when the bishop renewed the treaty, all the formalities regarding the date and the signatures were completed. *Ibid.*, p. 123. *Jizya* is the only term to appear in the treatises which were concluded by Muhammad and the military commanders in Syria and Mesopotamia and Persia. In practice the term meant both a poll tax and a land tax. The first was designed as «protection», a tax ensuring safety of life, property and freedom of worship. It was introduced by the Arabs in the interest of conquest and therefore is their invention. The second was an ordinary type of revenue.

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 130ff.; EUTYCHIUS, *Annales*, ed. CHEIKHO, p. 16.

[27] BALĀDHURĪ, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, p. 174.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 65.

[29] *Senad, das ist Vertragsurkunde*, tr. HAMMER V, p. 68.

In the light of these sources, the Arabs promised protection for as long as the subjugated people accepted their rule and paid the tribute. So long as the Christians accepted these conditions, they were regarded as ordinary subjects; their status scarcely differed in any practical particular from that of the Arabs themselves. That which was established under the new rulers in the Christian territories, according to all these treaties in general, fostered a peaceful coexistence with the conquered inhabitants. The treaties are marked by the spirit of religious tolerance. That is particularly the case with the ordinances given by ʿUmar. From the perspective of the Christian sources, he is even pictured as very friendly towards the Christians. Even in his last ordinances, he recommends the subjugated people to the care of his successor.

While the general character of the treaties with the Christians must be regarded as friendly and benevolent, the attitude toward Christian Arabs, however, was more inflexible. Treaties with them were more severe[30], forbidding the education of their children in the Christian spirit and assigning a double tribute[31]. ʿUmar is reported to have said that they were allowed neither to raise their children in the Christian tradition nor to hinder anyone from embracing Islam[32].

As a result of these operative factors during these epoch-making events, there was created an entirely new structure for the religious communities in Syria, Mesopotamia and Persia[33]. The Monophysites, the orthodox Christians and the Nestorians were given the same status, the same impositions and also the same privileges.

However, in order to avoid a wrong impression of the course of the conquest, an additional comment is necessary. Not all of the inhabitants escaped the sufferings and calamities of war in the way already described. While the people in the towns, who normally surrendered by capitulation, managed to secure their lives and properties, the inhabitants in the countryside did not have such an avenue of escape. They were exposed to the ravages of the war[34].

[30] BALĀDHURĪ, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, p. 181f.

[31] YAʿQOUB. *Le livre de l'impôt foncier*, p. 183f.

[32] ṬABARĪ, *Taʾrīkh ar-rusul* I, V, p. 2509.

[33] There were two forms of taxation: the *jizya* or the poll tax for the Christians namely a dinar per annum on each man, woman and children excluded; the other is the *kharaj* or the land tax which was obligatory for Christian as well as Moslem subjects. *Jizya* was also understood as a substitute for military service, FATTAL, *Le statut légal des non-musulmans*, p. 266ff.

[34] That which Balādhurī reports about Raqqa is instructive; the capitulation treaty was made for the town but the Arabs declared that the land belonged to them as conquered property and imposed the *kharaj* tax on the produce of the land.

Before this section is concluded, another aspect needs to be illuminated, an aspect the immense consequences of which could hardly be fully appreciated at the time. Islam appeared on the scene not only as a political power but also as a religious power, just at the time when Christianity among the Arabs was making increasingly greater inroads, opening up greater hopes for its mission in the future. Now suddenly a new page was turned, a new direction abruptly taken. The first symptoms showed up soon enough — people began to embrace Islam. The Arabs, in general, went over to Islam very easily and without much hesitation. The Ghassan Arabs[35] swiftly made their move in this direction. Other tribes soon followed suit. While certain nomad tribes in Mesopotamia resisted a little longer, these, too, embraced Islam[36]. But this movement did not affect only the Arabs. It also affected the Syrians. The correspondence of Išōʿyahb III shows the Nestorian patriarch facing sad results: the new religion from Arabia had ripped its first gaps into his flock[37] and that without suppression and violence[38]. Although that which Išōʿyahb presents cannot be generalized, we must reckon with the fact that the picture in many a place soon after the invasion changed in favor of Islam. It is clear that we do not need to believe everything related by Wākidī[39], however, it remains an undeniable fact that the beginnings of the trend towards Arabization began as a result of the Islamic conquest — a process that looked forward to a great future.

3. Monasticism During the Period of Invasion

After this introduction, necessary for the understanding of the new situation, it is time to turn to the main issue, namely, the fate of monasticism during the period of the Islamic invasion.

As already said, the attitude of the Arabs towards the ascetics and monks was more favorable than that towards the Christians, following the position taken by Muhammad[1]. That revered attitude could not entirely be forgotten when the armies of the Arabs began to move.

[35] See page 235ff.
[36] Muir, *Annals of the Early Caliphate*, p. 177.
[37] *Liber epistularum*, ed. Duval, p. 251.
[38] *Ibid.*, p. 167, 179f., 192.
[39] No doubt it is an exaggeration when he tells us that in Maipherqaṭ the majority of the inhabitants embraced Islam.
[1] See page 303f.

Among the military leaders at least there was an awareness of the fact that Muhammad himself had given a prescript for the friendly treatment of monks. It is significant that this has been recorded in Christian sources[2]. According to an anonymous Syrian chronicle, Abū Bakr ordered his troops in no way to harm the monks, nor to drive the stylites from their columns, nor to cause mischief to the monks in other ways because they had left the world and devoted themselves to the service of God[3]. It is instructive that these words appear in a Christian chronicle. A similar order from the lips of Abū Bakr, with reference to Syria, also appears to the effect that, are there Christian anchorites living in their hermitages where they practice their Christian faith, being far removed from the business of the world, they are not to be attacked nor are any of them to suffer injustice or vexation[4]. The tradition preserved in Termidi repeats the same: when Abū Bakr sent his troops to Syria, he instructed them about the people, who had enclosed themselves in cells, being anchorites whom they would come across; these ascetics were to be left in peace since only religious motives ruled their lives[5].

Given such premises, it is understandable that among the Christians there were many monks who sympathized with the Arabs. Occasionally we hear reports of their active involvement in the interest of the Arab invaders. According to Wākidī, Szur was delivered over to the Arabs by the monk Misa of Mardin[6]. It is related in Ṭabarī, in connection with the conquest of Ḥīra, that the monks came from the town in their full monastic garb and appeared in the front of the Arab army as intermediaries[7]. Makrizi tells of thousands of monks who went out to greet the caliph's general and his troops[8].

Of course, it would be much too superficial to depend upon such reports and traditions as if no sufferings or losses had occurred.

[2] Bar Penkayé, *Sources syriaques*, éd. Mingana I, p. 141, 175.
[3] *Chronicon ad ann. 1234 pert.*, ed. Chabot I, p. 240.
[4] Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh ar-rusul* I, p. 2564.
[5] Muhammad ben Ali-al-Termidi Nawadir, *al-usul*, p. 9. When the same source adds that the invaders will find also those upon whom Satan has put a sign on their heads, that they must be beheaded, it is not clear whether it means monks or priests. Nowhere do we learn about the distinction between the anchorites and monks living in the monasteries. It is a completely isolated tradition and we do not learn of such hostility against the Christians elsewhere.
[6] *Kitab al-Maghari*, p. 160f.
[7] About Ḥīra, see page 248.
[8] This took place in the year 643 in the desert of Nitria; «Les couvents des chrétiens», tr. Leroy, p. 198f.

Although the aims of the conquest and the instructions given by the caliph and the generals were humane[9], which, in addition, were widely known[10] — based, of course, on calculations to obtain maximum results from the Christian people — suffering and calamities could not be always avoided. As has already been said, the inhabitants living in the towns found themselves in a better situation when they capitulated than the inhabitants living in the countryside who were exposed to the ravages of war. Thus temporary losses by pillage and plunder were unavoidable. The habitual and deep seated cruelty of the Arabs, which found satisfaction in the cutting down of trees and of ravaging plantations[11] — a cruelty also exhibited by their women who cut off the noses and ears of the fallen victims[12] — could not always be controlled. That explains why the various reports could and did diverge from each other. For instance, it is reported of a stylite at Dārā to whom the inhabitants came for advice at the time of the invasion that he believed resistance to be better than all the worship services, giving an example by his own actions[13]. Ṭabarī tells us, in connection with the siege of Sus, that the Arabs also saw among the fighters on the wall monks who were very bellicose in their behavior[14].

The military actions, no doubt, brought suffering and devastation to the Christian communities, if not in the extent as in Egypt[15]. A number of places in Syria and Mesopotamia were thoroughly ravaged. Theophanes reports that towns on a line from Mopsvestia to Armenia were, during this period, left without inhabitants[16]. While we cannot control possible exaggerations by a Byzantine author, we must reckon with a number of devastated areas within which monasticism, too, must have seriously affected. According to an Arab author, Raqqā and certain other places

[9] JUYNBOLL, *Handbuch des islamischen Gesetzes*, p. 340f.
[10] *Chronicon ad ann. 1234 pert.*, ed. CHABOT I, p. 240.
[11] WAKIDI, *Kitab al-Maghari*, p. 163.
[12] *Ibid.*, p. 128.
[13] Wakidi tells us that he descended from his column and spread propaganda through the churches and monasteries. Then he went to Nisibis, living in no church or monastery and working also in the surroundings. Yet the people had a different opinion — Nisibis fell without fighting.
[14] ṬABARĪ, *Ta'rīkh ar-rusul* I, p. 2564f.
[15] Upon reading the chronicle by John of Nikiou, one receives an impression that the Arabs have ravaged Egypt much more savagely, JEAN DE NIKIOU, *Chronique*, éd. ZOTENBERG, p. 560, 562, 569, 577ff. About the monasteries there, see *Synaxarium Alexandrium*, ed. FORGET.
[16] *Chronographia*, ed. DE BOOR I, p. 363.

were so devastated that they were left almost bereft of inhabitants[17]. A contemporary Syrian chronicle bears the trustworthy remark on its title page that Ḥimṣ and many villages were devastated[18]. Archaeologists, too, have received the impression that many settlements may not have reached their level of floration[19] in the wake of the Arab invasion. However, it is not always possible to determine to whose account these devastations must be laid in each instance. That an important share falls to the Arabs is beyond doubt. But certainly not all. Michael Syrus has used sources which have laid much of the guilt at the door of the Byzantines[20] and an anonymous chronicle in Syriac also tells us about deeds of the Byzantines which the «tongue cannot relate»[21].

Whatever the exact circumstances may have been, monasticism did not survive the war situation without suffering. The catastrophe, in particular, struck monasteries which belonged to Arab Christians. Due to a hardened policy towards Arab Christians, monks, too, shared their fate. Ṭabarī tells us that the Christian Arabs in Gezira did not want to embrace the Islam and were prepared to suffer. As a result, one part of the monks «along with their cells and huts»[22] left the country to the territory of Byzantium[23]. The floration of monasteries and monasticism in this area was dealt a mortal blow[24].

But Syrian monasticism also suffered loss. Reports tell us about the monasteries which became victims of destruction[25] and about others which the Arabs had taken by force, who also did not shrink from keeping them as the booty of war[26]. The monks were completely helpless, too, when the Byzantines occupied their monasteries and made them into places of resistance[27].

Cases also occurred where the Arabs dealt brutally with ascetics and monks. An anonymous chronicle in Syriac tells us that, at the Mount of Mardē, they killed many monks and eminent ascetics and still more at a

[17] AL-RUKAIYAT, *Diwan*, ed. RHODOKANAKIS, p. 222.
[18] WRIGHT, *Catalogue* I, p. 65f.
[19] BUTLER, *Ancient Architecture in Syria*, p. 235.
[20] *Chronique* II, p. 422, 424.
[21] *Chronicon ad ann. 1234 pert.* I, p. 250.
[22] بكلّيتهم DOZY, *Supplement* II, p. 401.
[23] ṬABARĪ, *Ta'rīkh ar rusul* I, V, p. 2507.
[24] *Historia anteislamica*, ed. FLEISCHER, p. 129.
[25] *Histoire nestorienne*, ed. SCHER, p. 470.
[26] AL-MAKIN, *Historia Saracenica*, tr. ERPENIUS, p. 77.
[27] *Chronicon syriacum*, ed. BRUNS-KIRSCH, p. 108.

famous monastery on the Mount of Rēšʿainā[28]. Whether these monks were spies for the Persians as mentioned in Michael Syrus[29], must remain open. The Monastery of Qedar is also reported to have suffered severely. A company of monks was compelled to depart and to found a new monastery near Qalliniqos[30]. It is reported that the Arabs did not even respect the Monastery of Šemʿōn the Stylite. Aware of the fact that a great festival was to be held in the monastery, they appeared on the scene and took many pilgrims together with their wives and children as prisoners[31]. We also have reports about the profanation of the monasteries here and there by the authors who were not hostile in attitude towards the Arabs[32]. Moreover, Arab authors have made no secret of the fact that in the course of the war, monasteries, too, were destroyed[33]. These were phenomena which were unavoidable in the framework of military activities.

In general, one must take into account a limited measure of loss. In this connection, another observation is in order. It is instructive that in such centers as Ḥarrān, Raqqā, Edessa, Nisibis, Mosul, and Bālād in Syria and Mesopotamia, so rich in monastic communities, fell into the hands of the Arabs without military engagements[34]. The sufferings and the losses of the monasteries and the calamities which struck monasticism could not be so very great, for soon after the invasion, but still under fresh impressions of the events, a Syrian author could write that the Arabs have become masters under God, had not fought against the Christian religion, but defended it, respecting monks and monasteries as well as churches[35]. This author does not stand alone in his judgement; not much later another Syrian author states that the attitude of the Arabs towards the monks was such, that it was as if they had received an order from God to hold monasticism in honor and esteem[36].

[28] *Chronicon ad ann. 1234 pert.*, I, p. 245; cf. *Liber calipharum*, ed. LAND I, p. 116.
[29] *Chronique* II, p. 419.
[30] *Ibid.*
[31] *Chronicon syriacum*, ed. BRUNS-KIRSCH, p. 106.
[32] *Histoire nestorienne*, éd. SCHER, p. 470.
[33] CHAZI IBN AL-WASITI, *An Answer to the Dhimmis*, tr. GOTTHEIL, p. 422.
[34] ṬABARĪ, *Ta'rīkh ar-rusul* I, V, p. 2506f.
[35] IŠO'YAHB, *Liber epistularum*, ed. DUVAL, p. 182.
[36] BAR PENKAYÉ, *Sources syriaques*, éd. MINGANA I, p. 141.

XII. CONDITIONS DURING THE ERA OF THE UMAYYADS

1. INTRODUCTION

As we have already seen, Abū Bakr ordered his troops to conclude treaties with every tribe and settlement and to assure them of life according to their customs and traditions which they had followed until then, and to assure the retention of their full religious life[1]. The protection given to the Christians was also given to the Jews whose synagogues were to function in the same way as the religious and cultic traditions of the inhabitants of Mah Bahzīdān; they were not to be compelled to embrace another religion and no difficulties were to be put in their way to observe their religion[2]. Even at the time of al-Farisi there was no place or town in Persia where the fire altars were missing[3].

Before proceeding further, a particular question must be brought up. It concerns the so-called covenant of ʿUmar.

The so-called covenant of ʿUmar appears in various forms in many sources by the Arab authors. The terms included in these documents go far beyond the stipulations found in the treaties of capitulation. One of those in very elaborated form appears in Hamadani[4]. Its expansions and accretions leave on with the impression that this document clearly must belong to a different and much later time, to a time when practical life raised a number of problems which necessitated the imposition of restrictions. The same seems to be the case with the six stipulations and another half dozen desired additional stipulations formulated in Mawerdi[5]. In other words, it is patent that the number of restrictions had been growing with the passage of time. These restrictions concern ecclesiastical buildings[6], worship[7], hair and dress[8], housing[9], gatherings

[1] *Chronicon ad ann. 1234 pert.*, ed. CHABOT I, p. 240.
[2] ṬABARĪ, *Ta'rīkh ar-rusul*, I, V, p. 2633.
[3] AL-FARISI, *Descriptio ditionis moslemicae*, ed. DE GOEJE, p. 58.
[4] *Thesaurus Regum auctore Seiid*, ALI HAMADANENSI, tr. ROSENMÜLLER I, p. 18f.
[5] AL-MAWERDI, *Traité de droit public musulman*, tr. OSTROROG, p. 39.
[6] Not to show a cross on the churches.
[7] Beating the *nākūs* gently was all that was allowed; it was also forbidden to raise voices in chanting.
[8] To cut the hair in the front. To tie the *zunnār* around the waist; it was not allowed

of the Christians in public[10], the use of Quran[11] and the special obligations of Christians towards the Arabs[12]. One of its forms appears as a letter from ʿUmar. In addition to other humiliating restrictions, the stipulation not to build a church, monastery, hermitage, or cell, nor to repair those which had become dilapidated is included[13]. Another version of such a document appears in a letter sent to Abu ʿUbaida, the chief commander in Syria. Among other restrictions, this letter includes the stipulation «not to build in Damascus and its environs a church, monastery, chapel, monk hermitages, not to repair what is dilapidated»[14].

Upon critical examination, one must conclude that the so-called covenant of ʿUmar is spurious[15] and cannot be the work of ʿUmar[16] but must be regarded as a fabrication produced much later[17].

However, one opinion which comes up again and again, and it seems to be venerable: «In any town founded by the Arabs, Christians may not build a church, nor beat the *nākūs* ... but in any founded by foreigners, and captured by the Arabs, where they surrendered, they may do these things». Whether this point of view, however, goes to the earliest times is not clear.

In the light of all the trustworthy and authentic historical documents, the Arab invasion must be assessed as a military occupation which left much in the occupied lands completely untouched. Of course, the magnanimous attitude of the Arabs was not without its mundane aspect. Behind it there stood the economic political aim — obtaining the tribute. In Muslim eyes, the satisfaction gained from financial gains was still

anyone to resemble a Muslim in dress and appearance; nor was the riding upon saddles permitted.

9 The houses of the Christians were not allowed to be taller than those belonging to Arabs.

10 It was not permitted them to assemble in any of the quarters of the Arabs nor in their presence.

11 It was forbidden to learn the Quran or to teach it to children.

12 Prohibited was any more to hinder any Arab from stopping in the church by night and day; there was an obligation to entertain them for three days.

13 IBN ʿASAKĪR, *History* I, p. 178.

14 *Ibid.*, XI, p. 149.

15 DE GOEJE, *Mémoire sur la conquête de la Syrie*, p. 143f.; CAETANI, *Annali dell'Islam* III, p. 957ff.; MUIR, *Annals of the Early Caliphate*, p. 139.

16 TRITTON, *The Caliphs and Their Non-Muslim Subjects*, p. 10ff.

17 «Some of its provisions seem to have been enacted first by ʿUmar II, which may have helped the attribution of it to his greater namesake», *ibid.*, p. 233.

worth more than the coming over of masses into Islam for that would only increase the number of those entitled for pensions.

As it happened, most of the change in the land only occurred at the highest level of the occupation power. The facts speak for themselves. Insofar as the system of internal administration was concerned, there were practically no changes. The actual work in government offices was continued by the same personnel. The financial apparatus operated by the Byzantine, Jewish and Persian officials, and conducted in Greek and Persian, continued for many years. In the same way were the affairs of the churches left under the control of their respective leadership. They, too, could continue to conduct their affairs so long as the subjugated people accepted the rule of the Arabs and paid the taxes. With the exception of the payment of tribute, the new conquerors exacted no new demands from their subjugated inhabitants.

While the clergy was not exempted from the poll tax, the monks who depended upon the charity of the people were exempted in the same way as profane beggars[18]. As long as the Christians paid the tribute, they were regarded as ordinary subjects and their status scarcely differed from that of the Arabs themselves. The atmosphere thus created was marked by the spirit of religious tolerance. Sometime this even evoked admiration. This is evident, for example, in a story told of Khālid al-Kasri: when he built a church for his mother in Kufa, it was just behind the wall of the mosque, and when the *nākūs* was beaten as an invitation for worship, the loud chanting even drowned out the voice of the imam[19].

Under the first Umayyads, the new potentates were on fairly good terms with the subjugated people. Arab historians revelled in the telling of accounts and stories about the tolerance and magnanimity of the conquerors. It was a period of peaceful coexistence with the conquered inhabitants. Life in the monasteries and churches was left intact as it was in the villages and settlements. Not only did the Arab invasion leave Christian culture in general untouched, but it also gave new opportunities for the future. All this must be regarded as a very magnanimous approach on the part of a religion which had achieved such splendid victories within so short a time. For Christians, all this meant immense

18 Since monasteries were land owners, they were obliged to pay the land tax.

19 IBN KHALLIKĀN, *The Biographical Dictionary* I, p. 212.

20 SPULER, «Die westsyrische Kirche», p. 170ff. HAGE, *Die syrisch-jakobitische Kirche.*

gain. After some suffering and loss, unavoidable in war actions, a new epoch was opened up for the Christian communities, one allowing them time to heal their wounds and the recovery of their life[21].

Even more can be said. In the wake of these epoch-making events, a completely new atmosphere for the Christian communities was evoked. A situation was created in which the Monophysites, the orthodox Christians and the Nestorians were given the same status, with the same impositions and with the same privileges. This must be assessed as a completely new era for the Christians in Syria, Mesopotamia and Persia. They could now, for the first time, enjoy a freedom and tolerance such as they had never known of under their former rulers and masters. The hard-pressed and persecuted Monophysites in particular, under the masters, attained a degree of religious enfranchisement which they had never enjoyed. The new status of the Monophysite church made it possible for the monasteries to expand their network even beyond the Syrian border into the Persian territory. In this process it could be allowed to celebrate excellent moments of progress.

At the beginning of the Umayyad period, a prophecy — put on the lips of Rabban Sargīs — may as a *vaticinium ex eventu* be used by way of illustration. According to it, after the Arabs have subjugated the lands and have captured the towns, peace and well-being would come into the world[22]. The same judgement is recorded in the chronicle of Seert: as soon as the time of invasion had past and the rule of the Arabs had begun consolidation, a real well-being took place[23]. Other sources reflect similar feelings, that, indeed, whith the Arabs a new and peaceful epoch had emerged. Some decades later, Jōḥannān bar Penkayē, in describing the period of Caliph Moʿāwia, used words of fulsome praise for the times which had arrived. He writes that peace now ruled the world, such peace as had never been heard or seen since the time of the fathers and the forefathers[24]. It must be affirmed once again that such an assessment was not exaggerated. Over wide areas in which endless raids, incursions, military actions and wars had so frequently reduced life into ruins and ashes, there now extended peace and tranquility under stable rule. The effects, indeed, were far-reaching; the preservation of spiritual, social

[21] Christian legislative order and jurisdictional system was recognized by the Arabs, EDELBY, «L'autonomie législative des chrétiens», p. 323.
[22] «A Christian Bahira Legend», ed. GOTTHEIL, p. 217.
[23] *Histoire nestorienne*, éd. SCHER, p. 470, cf. p. 628.
[24] *Sources syriaques*, éd. MINGANA I, p. 147.

and cultural life was an immense gain. The progress in economic strength[25], the enlivening of cultural exchange and the development of commerce did not only materialize, but helped also to foster spiritual values. It is clear that monasticism, too, received a benefit under such conditions.

2. Monasticism Under the First Caliphs

As has already been mentioned, monasticism certainly experienced losses and monasteries were destroyed during the course of military action, although one ought not to set these losses at too high a figure. The fate of the Monastery of Bar Ṭūrā during these epoch-making times has been put into the prophecy of Yaunan, the founder of the monastery. According to his words, the Arabs would come and the monastery would be destroyed in the vortex of military operations but after seven years there would once again be peace and his scattered companions would return back to the same monastery after which the community would establish itself once again[1]. This episode conjures up the situation — whenever inmates of monastic communities were compelled to leave, they returned after a time to their monasteries to build up their life again. If their monastery was no longer intact, it was restored. This was the way in which new sanctuaries began to emerge.

This evolving life is also reflected in the epigraphic materials. New ecclesiastical buildings were erected in different places, some of which are even dated, having been built in the years 633[2], 641[3] and 652[4] as evidenced by the inscriptions. Sama or Sameh, southwest of Boṣra[5] bears the date 646 on the lintel[6]. That is also how new monasteries were built even though they do not appear in the light of the epigraphic materials.

In addition to the monasteries already introduced, others, which in particular deserve acknowledgment, need to be noted.

In the first instance, it should be reiterated[7] that the monastic

[25] AS-SUYUTI, *History of the Caliphs*, tr. JARRETT, p. 142.
[1] *Histoire nestorienne*, éd. SCHER, p. 470.
[2] WADDINGTON, *Inscriptions grecques*, nr. 1997.
[3] *Ibid.*, nr. 2294.
[4] *Dict. Hist. Géogr. Eccl.* III, p. 1183.
[5] DUSSAUD, *Mission*, nr. 151.
[6] *Princeton University Expedition*, nr. 27.
[7] See page 307ff.

community had suffered during the Islamic invasion; monks suspected of being spies of the Persians were killed by the Arabs. One monastery which had experienced severe suffering cannot be omitted from the list. The catastrophe to which reference is made is the one which descended upon the Monastery of Qedar and that of Benātā in the region of Mardin[8]. It is somewhat gratifying to learn that these catastrophes did not mean the end for these monasteries. These monks who survived the massacre and the destruction founded new monasteries, namely the Monastery of Bet Resyar and the Monastery of Estōnā[9], albeit at different loci.

Another monastery, one which has secured its reputation in connection with the work of the Syriac Massorah, also cannot be passed over, namely, the Monastery of Qarqaphtā. This monastic center played a very important role in fixing the Syriac Masoretic traditions[10]. It was located southwest of Mardin at the river of Ḥabūr[11], not far from Reš'ainā at the town of Magdal[12]. The founder of this monastery was a certain Šem'ōn. The exact time that this monastery came into existence is not known, but it must have taken place at the beginning of the rule of the Umayyads[13]. It should also be added that many metropolitans and bishops were elected from this monastic community[14]. But this monastery has not only furnished ecclesiastical dignitaries, it has also given its share of martyrs, martyrs who have added to the lustre and fame of this monastic community. It is very regrettable that nothing is known about the circumstances of these martyrs[15].

Finally, a monastery connected with a martyr from the ranks of Arab Christians merits a place. This monastery has to do with a victim of the tribe of Taghlib. Upon the order of the emir of Mesopotamia, Muhammad b. Marwān, pressure was put on Mu'ād, the chieftain of the tribe, to become an apostate and to accept Islam. Mu'ād, however, remained firm and therefore had to suffer martyrdom[16]. The actions of violence had been initiated in the year 707, beginning with the tribe of the

[8] *Chronica minora*, ed. BROOKS, p. 148; MICHAEL SYRUS, *Chronicon* II, p. 419.
[9] *Ibid.*, II, p. 419.
[10] BAUMSTARK, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, p. 259.
[11] HOFFMANN, ZDMG XXXII, p. 745.
[12] SMITH, *Thesaurus syriacus*, col. 3762.
[13] BARSON, *Histoire*, p. 47.
[14] ARMALET, *Les couvents*, p. 762.
[15] SLIBA, *Le martyrologe*, p. 163.
[16] MICHAEL SYRUS, *Chronique* II, p. 481.

Taghlibites; his martyrdom saved the tribe for a time before new reprisals were initiated. Over the tomb of the martyr, a monastery as a memorial of this blood-witness was established by Eustathios of Dārā[17]. The exact time of its foundation is not known but, according to all indications, that must have taken place at the beginning of the eighth century.

Additional information comes from the eastern regions. It is said about the Monastery of Heditā that it was built under the rule of Catholicos Ammeh[18]. That means that the monastery was built during the years 644-647, that is to say, soon after the Islamic invasion.

The monastery founded by Aphnimaran[19] near Mosul is reported to have been erected under Catholicos Gīwargī I, that is, between the years 661 and 680. Additional interesting information about the founding of monasteries comes from the synod held in the year 676 under the same catholicos. The record of it includes an important text which throws bright light upon the history of the founding of the new monasteries. These new monasteries were erected on the countryside as well as in towns[20]. It happens that that information came up because of the irregularities which had taken place and which had to be rectified by the synod, namely that the founders of the monasteries, in their zeal and eagerness, had neglected to take the episcopal jurisdiction into account sufficiently when the monks as well as lay people in their building activities had proceeded on their own initiative[21].

A very famous name in monasticism is that of Jōḥannān Dailomāyā, and that gives us more than sufficient reason to speak of his monastery. Its foundation is reported to have taken place under Catholicos Ḥenanīšō' I. This head of the eastern church ruled during the years 686/701[22].

In the sources, there are accounts which point to the fact that during the earliest period of the Umayyads, Syrian monasticism in general had been the recipient of a generous attitude from the Arabs. Occasionally this must have developed into a very friendly relationship. Here we are reminded of a source which comes from the resolutions of Ja'qōb of

[17] *Ibid.*, II, p. 481.
[18] 'AMR, *De patriarchis nest. commentaria*, tr. GISMONDI II, p. 32.
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 33.
[20] *Synodion orientale*, éd. CHABOT, p. 483.
[21] *Ibid.*
[22] 'AMR, *De patriarchis nest. commentaria* II, p. 35.

Edessa. There one finds a question which records the fact certain Arab emirs treated the monks with respect and that the issue turned on the point whether leading persons of the monasteries who were invited to eat with them could do so[23]. That such a question was submitted to the bishop is very instructive. One must infer that invitations were not as rare as one may otherwise have thought. In such an atmosphere the monks enjoyed friendly relations with the Arabs as did the Arabs with the Christians; given the peaceful climate, such friendly relationships expressed a mutual entertainment and hospitality developed in due course — more than was pleasing to the ecclesiastical dignitaries[24].

Another instructive case is to be found in sources having to do with East Syrians. In the history of the Monastery of Mār Sabrīšōʿ, we are told that an Arab potentate entertained a reverent attitude towards Abbot Jōḥannān, seeking contacts with him and coming to him[25]. The same is said of Rabban Theodor[26]. Such phenomena by no means need to be considered rare exceptions. For the development of monasticism, such an atmosphere evoked useful premises.

The period of the Umayyads was such that monasticism in retrospect could not do otherwise than to be grateful for the special privileges, such as letters of protection given to monasteries as well as to leading ascetics by the first caliphs. Thus the Syrian authors had good reasons for showering the first caliphs with praises for their magnanimity and friendliness[27].

3. The First Signs of a Changing Mood

That which has been said up to now does not remain valid for the entire period of the Umayyads. Certain reservations are still necessary for a final assessment of this era. Darker clouds appeared on the horizon sooner than expected, introducing a certain dissonance into the peaceful conditions. However, it must be said immediately that a sporadic and antagonistic outburst against the Christian communities was not at first the consequence of set policy but rather depended on the whim of a given caliph.

[23] See page 354.
[24] Nau, *Ancienne littérature canonique syriaque* III, p. 65f.
[25] *Histoire du couvent de Sabrišo*, éd. Mingana, p. 198.
[26] *Histoire nestorienne*, p. 598f.
[27] *Chronicon ad ann. 1234 pert.*, I, 275.

Such a figure among the caliphs as Moʿāwia I, tolerant and liberal in his policy[1], who has been remembered as generous towards the Christians, particularly in connection with the rebuilding of the church of Edessa[2], made room for quite a number of very different characters. The rule of Caliph Walīd (705-715) was one of the first of this sort. He was a despotic and tyrannical ruler[3], violent in nature[4], who caused trouble to Christians who had become accustomed to tolerance and a friendly spririt. He interfered with the affairs of the churches[5] and the Christians had to endure their first bitter experiences[6]. Still more reckless was ʿUmar II (717-720). New vexations for Christians were inaugurated under his rule. His legislation issued in a number of degrees containing humiliating regulations.

Perhaps the episode involving the cathedral of John the Baptist in Damascus[7] serves best as an illustration of the changed mood. This episode characterizes the changed atmosphere. First of all, it must be said that the story about the dividing of the cathedral in Damascus into a Christian and a Muslim part is pure legend. No such peaceful decision regarding this famous sanctuary in Damascus occurred. Both caliphs Moʿāwia and ʿAbd al-Malik attempted to take over the whole of the cathedral of John the Baptist. However, the Christians resisted and in the atmosphere of that time, they succeeded. Even though the caliphs then offered large sums of money to buy the cathedral, the Christians remained adamant in their stand and they were successful. Nothing happened with regard to the status of the cathedral and they continued to worship there. Then Caliph al-Walīd tried once more to buy the cathedral. When he failed, he lost his temper and resorted to force. He took it by force and transferred the famous sanctuary into a mosque[8]. And so it passed into Arab hands in the aftermath of bickerings and

[1] Lammens, «Études sur le règne du calife Omaiyade Moʿawia I», p. 256ff.
[2] In the year 679-80 a part of the great church in Edessa collapsed due to an earthquake. Caliph Moʿawia I gave the order for its rebuilding. *Chronicon ad. ann. 1234 pert.* I, p. 288; *Chronica minora*, p. 231.
[3] as-Suyuti, *History of the Caliphs*, p. 228.
[4] One day the noise of the *nāḳūs* so annoyed him that he ordered the church destroyed; Masʿūdi, *Murūj udh-dhahab* V, p. 381.
[5] When the patriarch of Antioch died, he refused to appoint his successor; Severus ben el-Moqaffa, *Historia patriarcharum Alexandr.*, ed. Seybold, p. 133.
[6] *Chronicon ad ann. 1234 pert.* I, p. 299.
[7] *Géographie d'Aboulféda*, tr. Guyard II, 2,8.
[8] Lammens, «Le calife Walīd et le partage de la mosquée des Omayyades à Damas», in: Études sur le siècle des Omayyades, p. 269ff.

quarrels[9]. With this episode, cold winds began to blow into that atmosphere. The warmth of tolerance had to retreat.

4. The Impact of the Change

That Caliph al-Walīd did not like monasticism appears in trustworthy sources; however, he did not give any particular orders to interfere in the life and activities of monasticism. Insofar as the sources are concerned, only occasional actions are reported. According to one episode recorded by Masʿudi, a serious hostile action did take place. He had heard the voice of a gong and asked about the location of the annoying noise; and upon hearing that there was a monastery in the vicinity, he ordered it to be demolished immediately[1].

The change in mood soon made itself felt as measures undertaken by Caliph ʿUmar II show. These measures were designed to harass and to humiliate the Christians. He forbade Christians to imitate Arab dress[2] and ordered them to dress differently[3]. In connection with these measures, he was very inventive, imposing restrictions for riding[4] and for the appearance of the Christians in public places[5]. He also forbade the use of the *nakus* and curtailed loud chanting in worship[6]. The reports in the sources about the conflicts which these decrees created indicate that the monasteries had become targets of criticism and action. Caliph ʿUmar is reported to have commanded his governors not to destroy existing sanctuaries but not to allow the building of new ones[7].

[9] This was not the end of the quarrels. When ʿUmar b. Abd al-ʿAziz came to power, the Christians complained again. His verdict was: if this was one of the 15 churches included in the treaty then its freedom was guaranteed, no one had any right to harm it. The caliph ordered to return the church to the Christians. Then the Arabs started a rebellion protesting that their place of worship could not be transformed into a church again. In that complicated situation a compromise was finally reached — the Christians received churches in the suburbs in compensation. Balādhurī gives a full account of these events.

[1] MASʿŪDĪ, *Les prairies d'or*, tr. DE MEYNARD V, p. 381; *Eutychii patriarchae Alexandrini annales*, ed. ZAYYAT II, p. 372.

[2] BAR ʿEBRĀYĀ, *Chronicon eccl.* II, p. 117.

[3] He prescribed to the Christians to wear a special girdle and to cut the front hair short.

[4] He forbade them to use riding saddles on horses but only to use pack-saddles; *Chronicon ad ann. 1234 pert.* I, p. 307.

[5] He forbade them to appear in public unless they had cut the forelock and wore girdles of leather. IBN ʿASĀKIR, *History* I, p. 180.

[6] *Chronicon ad ann. 1234 pert.* I, p. 307.

[7] ṬABARĪ, *Taʾrīkh ar-rusul* II, p. 137f.

New and dissonant trends were thus introduced into the up to now friendly relationships. During the following decades, the treatment of the Christians exhibits contradictions obviously caused by the mood of the potentates. It is a fact that sanctuaries were taken by force and transformed into mosques. However, it is also true that new sanctuaries were erected even in the towns which were founded by the Arabs, such as Fustat and Basra.

Such discordant winds would all too easily provoke feelings of antagonism. Occasional outbursts of hatred and threats have left noticeable traces in the sources. When al-Asbagh visited a monastery in Halwān, he saw a picture of the Madonna, spat on it and upbraided the community, saying: «If I find an opportunity, I will blot out the Christians from this province»[8].

Such a change of mind on the part of some caliphs must have invited trouble from smaller potentates who quickly read the direction of the wind. Incidents began to appear more and more frequently. In Iraq, Governor Jusuf b. ʿUmar displayed obstinancy and spitefulness towards the Christians[9]. His successor, Haddāz (694-714) was even more reckless, indeed, to such a degree that later Arab authors spoke of his deeds with scorn and disdain[10]. As a result of his undertakings, people fled from the provinces[11] and economic conditions there were devastated within a short time[12]. According to an account preserved in a reliable source during the building of Wasit, he ordered material for the erection of his residence to be taken from the demolished buildings of the settlements. Among these, the Monastery of Mār Sargīs[13] is listed.

It is to be reckoned that under such capricious local potentates, monasticism, too, occasionally had to experience its share of vexations. From such oriental despots, with their extravagant needs and their impulses to suppress their subjects[14], no one was safe. Troubles more commonly appeared as the monasteries felt the insatiable greed of the oriental potentates. Time after time the monasteries were compelled to

[8] SEVERUS IBN AL-MOQAFFA, *Historia patriarcharum Alexandr.*, p. 134.

[9] MARI, *De patriarchis nest. commentaria* I, p. 58.

[10] *al-Gazzāli's Buch vom Gottesvertrauen*, tr. VON WEHR, p. 90.

[11] *Vie d'al-Hadjdjad ibn Yousof*, ed. PÉRIER, p. 316.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 265.

[13] *Muʿjam al-buldān* IV, p. 883.

[14] It is reported about an emir in Mesopotamia in 722/3 who besides the economic reprisals loved inquisition, finding joy in cutting beards by force, *Chronicon ad ann. 1234 pert.* I, p. 309.

satisfy the uncontrollable urges of these rulers. Time after time monasteries had to help to quench the burning hunger for money. Under Caliph Abd al-Malik (685-705), for example, a sum of money was demanded from Catholicos Ḥenanīšō'. In order to meet the demand for this huge sum of money, the monasteries, too, had to raise their share; to do so, they had to sell their precious vessels[15].

The needs of the caliphs for money grew steadily and they grasped for ever new means of taxation. The situation of the Christians gradually began to worsen. New troubles were inaugurated with the appearance of land surveyors and enumerators of animals[16] whose activities announced the coming of new financial obligations. All kinds of pretexts were employed to obtain the money the caliphs needed. Typical is an episode recorded in the Maronite chronicle. When in a doctrinal disputation, the Monophysite bishops Theodor and Sebokt in Damascus before Caliph Mo'āwia lost their case to the Maronites, the caliph quickly utilized the occasion to demand a huge sum of money from the Monophysites, namely, 20,000 dinars as the price of leaving them in peace — according to his clever idea that the Maronite church would not be allowed to persecute them. This was not all. Given his inventiveness, he made this lump sum a continual obligation upon the Monophysite bishops, to be paid annually to the caliph. The Monophysite patriarch had no alternative but to put a tax on all monks and nuns, as well as all the members of his church. Once again, these institutions had to suffer because the tax had to be divided between the monasteries and convents of the nuns[17].

Such a spirit was contagious. The local potentates swiftly adopted whatever additional sources for income commanded themselves. When Abbot Išō'yahb of the Monastery of Bēt Abē demolished the church of the monastery in order to replace it with a new one, the governor of Mosul was quick to exploit the opportunity and to demand of the monastery a sum of 15,000 dirhems[18].

5. Monasticism Under the Last of the Umayyads

Regardless of some changes in the atmosphere, monasticism continued its life, revealing a strength to survive. Indeed, not even was expansion of

[15] 'Amr, *De patriarchis nest. commentaria*, p. 34.
[16] *Chronique de Denys de Tell-Mahré*, éd. Chabot, p. 10.
[17] *Chronicon maroniticum*, p. 55.
[18] Thomas of Marga, *The Book of Governors*, ed. Budge I, p. 206.

the network of monastic establishments brought to a stop. This comes to the fore in the history of the most outstanding founders of the monasteries and their monastic establishments.

First of all, a case connected with a very famous name may serve as an illustration. This has to do with Theodōṭā, bishop of Amid, formerly a monk, who was elevated to the episcopal see of Amid. The discovery of his biography has resuscitated this dignitary, this unknown author, from oblivion[1]. This source has found its hiding place in a priceless corpus of biographies, and it is unique in its kind[2]: «The history, i.e. the victory of the holy Mār Theodoṭā, bishop of the town of Amid», composed by Šem'ōn of Šemīšaṭ[3]. Here we are told that he first studied in the Monastery of Zuqnīn and in Qennešrē, the monastery in which he received his monastic garment. His renown was due to his severe ascetic practices and manners of mortification as well as his work in charity in the service of the poor and the destitute. He was consecrated by Patriarch Julyānā II[4]. From this biography we learn that his initiative, zeal and vigor in the affairs of the church were exemplary. He also founded a large monastery[5]. The location for the monastery is also given: it was near the village of Qalūq. It was still existing at the time that Dionysios of Tell Maḥrē wrote his chronicle[6]. Centuries later, Jōḥannān of Mardē selected the ruins of this famous monastery in order to restore them[7]. Bishop Theodoṭā eventually resigned his episcopal duties and returned to monastic life; he retired to the region of Dārā, namely, the area between Dārā and Antioch where he erected a column. Inasmuch as Theodoṭā resigned from his episcopal office and lived for a while the monastic life, dying[8] on August 15, 698[9], it must be concluded that the founding of his

[1] Vööbus, «Discovery of an Unknown Syrian Author: Theōdōṭe of Amid».
[2] Ms. Damascus Patr. 12/18, fol. 59a-70b; Ms. Mardin Orth. 275, fol. 229a-287b, Vööbus, *Syriac Manuscripts*.
[3] Vööbus, «Découverte de la biographie de Théodote d'Amid par Šem'ōn de Samosate», p. 39ff.
[4] Patriarch Julyānā II ruled from 687 til 707/8, Michael Syrus, *Chronique* IV, p. 752, cf. III, p. 449.
[5] See Vööbus, «Découverte de la biographie», p. 39ff.
[6] *Chronique de Denys de Tell-Mahré*, éd. Chabot, p. 20.
[7] *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition* II, ed. Vööbus, p. 203.
[8] Fol. 69b.
[9] The vita states explicitly that Theodōṭā died when Julyānā was still in his patriarchal office which he held until 707/8. Then Nau's notice: «évêque Jacobite en 713, a quitté l'épiscopat pour se faire stylite», *«Martyrologes et ménologes orientaux»*, p. 84, must be erroneous.

monastery had to take place soon after his consecration; at the earliest, this would have happened in the year 687.

Information which comes from the quarter of monumental inscriptions is particularly welcome. Pognon found in a village northwest of Edessa a row of cells carved into the rock face and a complex of ruins which were the remains of a once large monastery. Lucky chance has rescued the inscription which has preserved exact information about the founding of this monastery in the vicinity of the metropolis of Mesopotamia. It was founded in the year 1059 A. Gr., i.e. 747/8 A. D.[10].

For this period, too, the sources which emanate from east Syrian quarters flow more abundantly. The case of Gabriel of Kaškar is one which cannot be passed over. The reason is this, that in this eminent monastic representative we have to do with a very extraordinary founder of monasteries. It is reported that he founded as many as four monasteries. One was founded in Maḥōzē, in Bēt Garmai, the second in the vicinity of Ṭūrā Qūni. In this connection, the fact that this was a large monastery with a community comprised of nearly two hunderd monks is added. The third monastery under the name of Gabbārē was erected in the region of Bēt Rušmē. The last monastery, named Mār Gabriel, was established near Mosul[11]. It should be noted that the first monastery to be established is said, by the author, to be the final place for the founder. Here Mār Gabriel died in the year 1050 A. Gr., i.e. 738/9 A. D.

When we put the data scattered in the various documents and sources together, the result is this, that Syrian monasticism during the Umayyad period was not only satisfied with the former extent and network of the monastic establishments which it possessed before the time of the Islamic invasion, but also that it did not remain satisfied with that, nor with adjusting and repairing the old points of support. The sources show growth and expansion which in turn clearly demonstrates that new monasteries were needed. Monasticism must have felt itself to have enough strength to expand.

Further, our sources illumine conditions during the period of the Umayyads. The Arabs did not keenly follow up on the fulfillment of new trends which they had set up, namely, the prohibiting of the building of new monasteries. That the Arabs themselves annulled this prohibition — as we are told of Mār Gabriel who, after he became bishop, obtained

[10] *Inscriptions sémitiques de la Syrie*, p. 102.

[11] IŠŌʿDENAḤ, *Le livre de la chasteté* §121, p. 276.

from ʿUmar a diploma which allowed him to found and build churches and monasteries wherever he wished in the area from Ṭūr ʿAbdīn up to Babel — that is unbelievable[12]. Such a tradition, without, a doubt, belongs to the realm of sheer speculation. The truth is that the Arabs simply closed their eyes in certain cases of transgressions; it would surely not have remained unnoticed that new monasteries were erected not only in the contryside but also in the vicinity of the towns. Despite all of the deviations by some of the caliphs during this period, there nevertheless still was room for a spirit of tolerance. That spirit is the reason why the Umayyad period has been adjudged with such severe criticism by later Islamic authors who held that there had then been a neglect to take the religious obligations of Islam with the requisite seriousness.

When evaluating the state of monasticism during the period of the Umayyads from several perspectives, particularly the creative forces in play to cultivate the genre of ascetic and spiritual literature, it is obvious that Syrian monasticism was passing from its creative phase into a twilight phase of transmission. This, however, cannot be said about other areas of life and activities.

[12] «Un colloque du patriarche Jean», éd. NAU, p. 274f.

XIII. SOURCES OF STIMULI FOR SPIRITUALITY AND ASCETICISM

1. The Contribution of the literary legacy under the Name of Sābā

a. *The Sources*

The literary legacy preserved under the name of Sābā[1] has an extraordinary importance. It has been widely used and celebrated. How enthusiastically these writings have been welcomed and what a devotion has been given to them is reflected in the epithets given in the mystical names in variations: «The Spiritual Sābā»[2], *eš-šeḫ er-rūḥānī*[3], «Sābā the Great»[4], «Sābā, great and perfect and completed»[5], and «the Divine Sābā»[6].

The full title of his work is as follows: «The book of a great and perfect and complete one, Sābā, that speaks spiritually and above worldly things, that is suitable for the solitaries who have renunciated worldly goods, living in quietness, keeping to the practices and labors of solitariness, removed from all human business and encounters and from carnal bondage»[7]. His work embraces a series of discourses and a collection of letters. While the preservation of the discourses is better attested by more ancient manuscripts[8], his letters[9] in this respect stand behind.

Since the preservation of full collection of manuscripts of the legacy of Sābā starts quite late — Baumstark introduces Ms. Seert. 81, written in

[1] ܣܒܐ, «Old Man», «venerable».

[2] ܣܒܐ ܪܘܚܢܐ.

[3] «The spiritual Sheikh who concealed his name but showed his knowledge publicly», ABŪ'L-BARAKĀT, *Miṣbaḥ aẓ-Ẓilma*, p. 648.

[4] Ms. Mardin Orth. 418, fol. 1a-b.

[5] Ms. Birmingham Ming. Syr. 7, MINGANA, *Catalogue* I, col. 24ff.

[6] Ms. Aleppo Orth. 102, fol. 1b.

[7] Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,729, WRIGHT, *Catalogue* II, p. 584f.

[8] Ms. Vatican Syr. 125, ASSEMANI, *Catalogus* III, p. 155f. He characterizes the manuscript as «codex vetustissimus quidem».

[9] *La collection des lettres de Jean*, ed. BEULAY.

the year 1472/3 A. D., as the earliest[10] and from a partial codex only one reaches back to the year 1172/3 A. D.[11].

It is very fortunate that the search for unknown manuscript sources in the Syrian Orient has been crowned with such success. Important new sources have been brought to light[12].

The most important document comes from the monastery of Mār Ḥanānyā or Deir Zaʿfarān. This codex has incorporated both of the collections[13]. I refer to Ms. Mardin Orth. 417[14], a heavy codex which has preserved within it very precious sources. This manuscript is furnished with a colophon according to which it was written in the month of Ādār in the year 1785 A. Gr., i.e. in March 1474 A.D[15]. The codex produces surprise inasmuch as another writing of Sābā had found its hiding place in this document. Immediately after the capita scientiae, there is added another letter which bears the title: «The distinction of gifts from God»[16]. As the title indicates, the writing deals with the theme of spirituality and mysticism under the title «The *madrāšē* of Sābā». The same manuscript discloses to us still other writings from Sābā. Three texts stem from the genre of didactic poetry[17].

A corpus of Sābā's writings which besides the two collections includes others[18] appears in Ms. Birmingham Mingana Syr. 7[19], a codex[20] which is very remarkable in this respect. In this form it cannot, however, have come from a codex in the Monastery of Mār Mattai as it claims, and must be a compilation which was made later on[21].

Ms. Mār Mattai 27[22] is a heavy volume, a mine of wealth[23] for many

[10] About other manuscripts, see BAUMSTARK, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, p. 425.

[11] Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,729, WRIGHT, *Catalogue* II, p. 584f.

[12] VÖÖBUS, «Die Entdeckung wichtiger Urkunden für die syrische Mystik: Jōḥannān von Daljatā», p. 267ff.

[13] VÖÖBUS, *Syriac Manuscripts*.

[14] Quire 29, fol. 8aff.

[15] Written in the Monastery of Qarṭāmīn in Ṭūr ʿAbdīn.

[16] Quire 22, fol. 7a-8a.

[17] Quire 33, fol. 8bff.

[18] *Capitae scientiae*, arranged alphabetically, and various other pieces.

[19] MINGANA, *Catalogue* I, col. 24f.

[20] The codex was copied by Deacon Mateos bar Paulos in 1906 A. D., using a codex in the Monastery of Mār Mattai, written in the year 1485 A. D.

[21] Beulay wanted to see this codex but could not find it, *La collection des lettres*. I have examined all the manuscripts in the collection of the Monastery of Mār Mattai, but I have not seen it.

[22] In the collection of manuscripts in the Monastery of Mār Mattai in Maqlūb, Iraq.

[23] About the manuscript see page 408.

ascetic and mystical works. This codex incorporates collections of discourses and letters[24].

Ms. Mardin Orth. 418[25] is a heavy codex which presents a corpus of selected works in the realm of ascetic and mystical literature. The codex has incorporated both collections of discourses and letters[26]. This manuscript which was written in the Monastery of Ṣlībā has preserved its colophon which tells about its origin. Discounting an attempt to change the date[27], we learn that the manuscript was copied in the year 1782 A. Gr., i.e. 1470/1 A. D.

A similar body of material is to be found in Ms. Aleppo Orth. 102[28]. There is no colophon in this interesting manuscript but palaeographical considerations point to the same period as indicated in the previous instance as the time of its origin[29].

Still other unknown manuscript sources containing the literary legacy of Sābā have come to light. Indeed, the harvest has been rich[30].

Besides these two collections, individual discourses in separate circulation became very popular. This is demonstrated by the florilegia of selected writings in celebrated ascetic authors. The writings of Sābā were found to be so attractive that they were so widely copied and recopied; in the process, they were fused with the works of Isḥāq of Ninive and in Greek translation[31] travelled also to the west. Sābā's discourses have also found receptions elsewhere[32]. Sābā's discourses even reached Latin-speaking Christianity[33].

[24] Fol. 349b-377b; the end is missing.
[25] VÖÖBUS, *Syriac Manuscripts.*
[26] See note 24.
[27] The colophon reads 1482 A. Gr., i.e. 1170/1 A. D., but the number for the century has been altered. It looks that originally the year was 1782 A. Gr. Palaeographical considerations support this conclusion.
[28] This manuscript comes from the remnants of the manuscript collection which once belonged to the church in Edessa. About this collection, see SACHAU, «Über syrische Handschriftensammlungen im Orient».
[29] At present the manuscript is kept in the collection of manuscripts in the Church of Mār Gīwargī in Aleppo.
[30] Ms. Mār Behnām 8/6; Ms. Mardin Orth. 426. Ms. Midyat Melki 16, in the collection of manuscripts in the private possession of Chorepiscopus Melki in Midyat, Ṭūr 'Abdīn. The codex comes from the 18th cent. Ms. Damascus Patr. 10/5, copied in the year 1898 A. D. Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 232, copied in the year 1901 A. D. Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 310, written in 1905/6.
[31] The *mēmrā* under the title «De fuga mundi» appears in the Byzantine sources.
[32] Dorotheos, who flourished in the 6th cent. and lived in the Monastery in Gaza, a disciple of Barsanuphios, composed 23 spiritual discourses but one among them, namely discourse 24, belongs to Jōḥannān Sābā. ALTANER, *Patrologie*, p. 468.
[33] Two of his discourses were incorporated into a Latin version of a collection of the works by Isḥāq of Ninive, first edited in Venice in 1506 and was later included into the collection by MIGNE, *Patrol. Gr.*, LXXXVI, col. 885f. and 857-9.

The writings of Sābā, this coryphee of Syrian mysticism, have been held in very great esteem among the ascetics. It is certain that the writings of older mystics such as Pseudo-Macarius[34], Jōḥannān the Solitary of Apamea[35] and others were the sources from which Sābā drew. However, the quality of his literary legacy shows that he did not only carry these traditions on but gave to them an especial élan. This élan is reflected as well through the deep influence exercised by his works on mysticism in later times[36], an influence which reached even beyond the boundaries of Syrian culture. Translations of his writings into Arabic[37], Ethiopic[38], and Greek[39] provide impressive testimony about this.

b. *The Thoughtworld*

The manner of his presentation is very noteworthy. The author relates his own inner experiences but clothed in such a way and in such a form that it is not always easy to separate his own experiences, as they were felt by him, from figures and formulations drawn from ascetic and mystical traditions. That which is unfolded before us is the entire range of issues of ascetic life. This involves, on the one hand, questions of repentance, withdrawal from the world, internal struggles, temptations, distraction, distress, pride and self-custody, and on the other, comfort through the visitations of the Spirit, illumination and the benefits the stage of perfection can provide. In order to gain some idea of this atmosphere of piety, certain characteristic features should be singled out.

Sābā follows the lines which were common among the Syrian monks, using the scheme of somatic, psychic and pneumatic stages. This terminology had become very deep rooted. However, by comparison with other mystical authors of a more philosophical attitude, the images, figures and even the terminology of Sābā flows richly and exuberantly

[34] VÖÖBUS, *On the Historical Importance of the Legacy of Pseudo-Macarius.*
[35] *Johannes von Apamea*, ed. STROTHMANN.
[36] In this respect very instructive observations can be made in the *Ketābā d-Ītīqōn* by BAR 'EBRAYA, *Ethicon seu moralia*, ed. BEDJAN.
[37] GRAF, *Geschichte der christlich arabischen Literatur* I, p. 434ff.
[38] This translation was made from an Arabic version and has been connected with Aragawi Manfasawi, «The Spiritual Teacher». According to the colophon, the translation work into Ge'ez took place by the command of the King Lebna Dengel (1508/40 A. D.), WRIGHT, *Catalogue of the Ethiopic Manuscripts*, p. 37ff.
[39] BAUMSTARK, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, p. 226.

out of biblical sources. This was imagery which he could use effectively and forcefully. *Exempli causa* we quote a paragraph from his appeal: «For I dare to say in Pauline fashion that we are his temple[1]; then let us purify this temple, as he is pure, so that he will desire to have his abode in it; let us sanctify it, as he is holy, and adorn it with sober good works in which his lordship takes pleasure»[2].

It is instructive to note that the prominent emphasis in his teachings is on the idea of sharing Christ's passion. The invitation given to the ascetics is to become sharers in Christ's passion, a theme which has been fully developed with attention to every detail in the suffering and passion of Jesus[3]. All his deliberations display this heavy concentration on the passion in mystic experiences. The author's own inner life seems to have been occupied to a large extent with an ardent contemplation of the sufferings of Christ. The idea of the «imitatio Christi» is a well-known tenet in Origenistic theology — but this contemplation on the pains of the Passion is better seen as a link in that important stream of mystical piety which started with Ignatius. Moreover, all these sufferings lead to the stage of perfection which gives the mystic perfect contemplation, a mystical seeing through which gnosis is imparted to him.

Sābā impresses us by his many-sidedness in presentation. His thoughtworld moves in the stream of earlier ascetic and mystical orders. This becomes manifest in his figures and patterns in speech. ʾAphrēm employs the figure of the diver who plunges into the waters of purification and brings up the pearl of great price. The same attractive symbol in connection with another ancient Syrian figure of the merchant also appears here: «These priceless pearls are gathered to be placed in the treasuries of his mind by the merchant who is occupied with prayer; verily, he swims in the sea of life and purifies himself in the enormous floods, to be purified and beautified in order to become a garment of purple for Christ the eternal king ... Blessed are you who circle in the waves of light and on the wings of the Holy Spirit, and are embraced by an allencompassing depth whose limit is inscrutable. Blessed are you who

[1] Lit. «house».

[2] [illegible], Ms. Vatican Syr. 125, fol. 203. Discourse 2: «On flight from the world».

[3] Discourse 4: «On flight from the world».

cleanse your foulness in the untroubled sea, whose waves are light and whose floods are flame, consuming the sin of sinners who come to it»[4].

A similar observation can be made. Just as Jōḥannān the Solitary employs the figure of the unborn child[5] so does Sābā use this symbol, comparing the babe that is born into the world of Adam with the sons born by grace into the light of the new world[6]. The same phenomenon appears in the figure of the holy womb of repentance from which grace gives new birth to sons to be nurtured for a state of purity and illumination[7]. Here, too, belongs an idea which had become important through the mystical books of Pseudo-Dionysios the Areopagite and the Book of the Holy Hierotheos, namely the notion of the ascent of the mind. This feature in his writings shows up very frequently[8]. Furthermore, this special spiritual concept of the heavenly ascent was also well-known from Origen's ideas. Sābā mentions Macarios, too, and has also drawn material from these riches.

Sābā was fully familiar also with the work of Evagrios. His elaborate scheme of five kinds of contemplation[9] has found echoes in Sābā's discourses. This speculative element is somewhat surprising because his discourses and letters otherwise are pastoral and edifying and avoid deviations to the esoteric pathways in which Evagrios loved to wander. However, Sābā was attracted by the idea of the θεωρία[10] but his treatment of the matter presents reflections more congenial to his own thoughtworld[11]. Still, his «Chapters of knowledge» display ideas and technical terms of Evagrios.

A very slight Origenistic influence may be detected in his theology but that is rather insignificant by comparison with the general trend of his thought.

[4] [illegible], Ms. Vatican Syr. 124, fol. 316b-317a.

[5] «A dialogue on the soul».

[6] Discourse 23.

[7] Discourse 2: «On repentance».

[8] Especially in Discourse 6: «On the visitations that are bestowed on solitaries».

[9] *Six Centuries of Kephalaia gnostica* I, 27.

[10] Discourse 16: «On the θεωρία of the Holy Trinity».

[11] Discourse 21: «On prayer and on the powers of the spiritual beings».

It is with special warmth and affection that the author deals with the stage of perfection. In this connection, a variety of basic themes permeate his thoughtworld. He speaks of «the labor of prayer»[12] as the source of miraculous phenomena. In a special discourse devoted to these phenomena, he writes: «In the labor of prayer there blazes up in the soul the fire of Christ's love, and the heart becomes frantic with longing and kindles all the members; it exalts with love and goes out of its order (i.e. loses control of itself)»[13].

Sābā describes how the entire realm of mystical phenomena is opened up in connection with the visitation of the Spirit. As for ecstatic experiences as a result of the visitations of the Spirit, it is better to give the word to Sābā himself: «Sometimes it stirs up hot and fiery impulses in his heart through the love of Christ and his soul is enflamed, and his limbs are paralyzed and he falls on his face; sometimes he generates a fervent heat in his heart and his body and soul are enkindled so that he assumes that every (part) of him is consumed by the burning, except that which is in his heart»[14].

The movement of this path leads to the ultimate — the sphere of serenity. This ultimate stage involves as well a mental attitude towards God for which a Greek term has been chosen as the technical vocable to convey this notion. It is difficult to translate it in this particular meaning but of the various options, «outspokenness» comes closest[15].

Another Greek technical term plays an important role in this stage. That is the term θεωρία which had become common in Syriac mystical literature as a technical term for mystical seeing[16]. The term was

---

[12] ܥܡܠܐ ܕܨܠܘܬܐ.

[13] ܒܥܡܠܐ ܕܨܠܘܬܐ ܝܩܕܐ ܒܢܦܫܐ ܢܘܪܐ ܕܪܚܡܬܗ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ. ܘܠܒܐ ܠܒܐ ܒܪܓܬܐ ܘܡܫܓܪ ܠܟܠܗܘܢ ܗܕ̈ܡܐ. ܘܪܘܡ ܒܚܘܒܐ ܘܢܦܩ ܡܢ ܛܟܣܗ, Ms. Vatican Syr. 124, fol. 314a. Discourse 21: «On prayer and on the powers of the spiritual beings».

[14] ܘܐܝܬ ܙܘ̈ܥܐ ܫܚܝܡܐ ܘܢܘܪ̈ܢܝܐ ܡܙܝܥܐ ܒܠܒܗ ܒܪܚܡܬܗ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ. ܘܡܫܬܠܗܒܐ ܢܦܫܗ ܘܡܫܬܪܝܢ ܗܕ̈ܡܘܗܝ، ܘܢܦܠ ܥܠ ܐܦ̈ܘܗܝ. ܘܐܝܬ ܕܫܚܝܡܘܬܐ ܡܥܒܕܐ ܒܠܒܗ. ܘܡܫܬܠܗܒܝܢ ܦܓܪܗ ܘܢܦܫܗ. ܘܣܒܪ ܕܐܬܐܟܠ ܠܗ ܟܠܗ ܡܢ ܝܩܕܢܐ. ܣܛܪ ܡܢ ܕܒܠܒܐ, Ms. Vatican Syr. 125, fol. 170b. Discourse 7: «Intermediate stage».

[15] Παρρησία «boldness». In the Syriac translation of Evagrios it means freedom of speech at the time of prayer. Cf. WENSINCK, *Bar Hebraeus's Book of the Dove*, p. CVII.

[16] Discourse 16: «On contemplation of the Holy Trinity, that is to say the vision of the adorable persons revealed through mercy to the mind of the solitary», Ms. Vatican Syr. 125, fol. 194aff.

borrowed from Evagrios[17]. It is a very heavily-laden term which embraces also an ecstatic trance-consciousness. At the beginning of the discourse titled «On the stage of perfection» Sābā describes the exalted atmosphere in the following way: «Here then begins the entering into the treasury, this is the place of glorious revelations, the place of joy and exultation, the place without a shadow, the place of light wherein no mention of darkness is made, the place of life[18] and delight, the place of peace: its dwellers are illuminated by the sight of the beauty of the King»[19]. That which takes place in such an experience is utterly unspeakable inasmuch as the solitary is «admitted to the innermost mysteries of God»[20]. It constitutes the acme of Jōḥannān's mysticism[21].

c. *The Question of Authorship*

These very important ascetic and mystical writings involve also literary-critical problems which have been awaiting discussion. Who is this author who has produced a work so widely and enthusiastically used in monastic circles?

The question of authorship[1] has caused a good deal of discussion and it even has been felt to be a conundrum[2] right up to the present[3].

In Syriac literature, two persons have been associated or related to this problem, hence the confusion. One is Jōḥannān of Dālyāthā, a Nestorian author with whom Sābā has been identified. On the other hand, the same Sābā has been identified with Jōḥannān bar Penqāyē[4], a Nestorian

---

[17] *Evagrius Ponticus*, ed. FRANKENBERG, Cent. V, 79, 81; IV, 90. See also BOUSSET, *Apophthegmata*, p. 307, 312f., where also the definition of the term is given.

[18] ܕܢܝܚܐ, «rest» in Ms. Cambr. Add. 1999.

[19] ܡܢ ܗܪܟܐ ܡܫܪܐ ܡܥܠܬܐ ܗܝ، ܕܠܓܘ ܓܙܐ. ܐܬܪܐ ܗܘ ܕܓܠܝܢܐ ܡܫܒܚܐ. ܐܬܪܐ ܗܘ ܕܚܕܘܬܐ ܘܪܘܙܐ. ܐܬܪܐ ܗܘ ܕܠܐ ܛܠܠ. ܐܬܪܐ ܗܘ ܕܢܘܗܪܐ. ܕܕܘܟܪܢ ܚܫܘܟܐ ܒܗ ܠܐ ܡܬܥܒܕ. ܐܬܪܐ ܗܘ ܕܢܝܚܐ ܘܒܘܣܡܐ. ܐܬܪܐ ܗܘ ܕܫܝܢܐ. ܕܚܙܘܐ ܕܫܘܦܪܗ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܢܗܝܪܝܢ ܥܡܘܪ̈ܘܗܝ, Ms. Vatican Syr. 125, fol. 170a.

[20] Discourse 2: «Admonitions and counsels on sacred repentance».

[21] COLLESS, «The Mysticism of John Saba», p. 83ff.

[1] ASSEMANI, *Bibliotheca orient.* I, p. 433ff. places this author in the middle of the 6th cent. WRIGHT, *A Short History of Syriac Literature*, p. 108f. followed him.

[2] MOSS, *Catalogue of Syriac Printed Books*, col. 552 speaks of Jōḥannān Sābā as bishop of the Monastery of Mār Mattai.

[3] RAES, *Anaphorae Syriacae* II, p. 87ff.

[4] So also his anonymous biography, preserved in Ms. Mardin Orth. 420, fol. 229a; Ms. Midyat Melki 5, fol. 53b-55a.

monk[5]. Some works have put forward a categorical claim[6] that under the name of Sābā no one else is to be understood than Jōḥannān bar Penqāyē[7]. This position in some sources has very firmly been affirmed[8]. One reason for confusion between Jōḥannān bar Penqāyē and Jōḥannān of Dālyāthā can be deduced from the fact that both have been connected with the same monastery[9]. The conundrum has stimulated other attempts to resolve it[10].

In this muddle, help must be sought from ʿAbdīšōʿ, the connoisseur of Syriac literature. He distinguishes between two authors, one Jōḥannān bar Penqāyē of the village Penek in Bēt Zabdai, an author of various works[11], and the other Jōḥannān of Dālyāthā, an author of two volumes on the way of monasticism and letters which he wrote[12]. In the light of these facts, it is clear that Jōḥannān of Dālyāthā cannot be identified with Jōḥannān bar Penqāyē[13]. New observations which come from the vocabulary and the thoughtworld displayed in their writings have confirmed this position[14]. Thus the position taken by Baumstark[15], Chabot[16], and Graf[17], that Sābā was actually Jōḥannān of Dālyāthā is proven to be true.

That Jōḥannān of Dālyāthā belongs to the eighth century is indicated by an episode which took place under Šelēmōn Ḥedattā[18] which gives us a chronological clue[19]. Fortunately, we do not need to stop there since

[5] *Studia syriaca* I, p. 35. Also SACHAU, *Verzeichnis* II, col. 554f. See also SCHER, «Notice sur la vie de Yoḥannan», p. 161f.

[6] So in Ms. Mardin Orth. 420, fol. 229a; Ms. Midyat Melki 5, fol. 53b.

[7] CHABOT, «Éclaricissements sur quelques points», p. 267.

[8] Ms. Harvard 30, written in the 15th cent., GOSHEN-GOTTSTEIN, *Syriac Manuscripts*, also claims that the author is Jōḥannān bar Penkayē «and not Joḥannan of Dalyātā».

[9] Both authors were connected with the Monastery of Dalyathā. According to Dawid the Phoenician, Jōḥannān of Penek entered the Monastery of Dalyathā.

[10] Such an author as Dawid the Phoenician wanted to resolve the problem so that all three, Jōḥannān bar Penkayē, Jōḥannān of Dalyathā and Sābā Rūḥānāyā go back to one and the same person who carried out his literary activites under several names. Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 75, fol. 56a. Cf. *Studia Syriaca* I, p. 41ff.

[11] *Catalogus* CXXI, ed. ASSEMANI, p. 189f.

[12] *Catalogus* LIX, p. 103f.

[13] VÖÖBUS, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen* I, 1,B, p. 344f.

[14] BEULAY, «Précisions touchant l'identité et la biographie de Jean Saba», p. 97f.

[15] BAUMSTARK, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, p. 211, 225f.

[16] *Littérature syriaque*, p. 105f.

[17] *Geschichte der christlich arabischen Literatur* I, p. 434ff.

[18] This episode falls between the year 760 and 780.

[19] The chain of this teachers as reported by Īšōʿdenaḥ yields the same result. See CHABOT, «Éclaircissements sur quelques points», p. 267.

our knowledge about this Jōḥannān can be deepened. We can learn more about his background from the biographical sources at our disposal[20]. Among these writings we owe one to Īšōʿdenaḥ[21]. According to his biography[22], he was from Bēt Nūhadrā, that means the plain of Ninive. He received his monastic garb at the Monastery of Mār Jōzādāq in the mountains of Qardū where he started his monastic career[23]. Later he is reported to have moved to the mountain wilderness of Bēt Dālyāthā where he lived for a long time, practicing very rigorous asceticism[24]. The same source adds that he composed numerous works on monasticism. It is further reported that in his old age he left the place and settled in the mountains of Qardū in the vicinity of the village of Argūl. There a number of monks gathered around him and set up a monastery. It is added that the canons which he gave to the new community corresponded to those in the west Syrian monasteries. After his death he was buried in the Monastery of Sahdōnā.

Geographical data are even more complete in a brief biography[25]. According to this source, Jōḥannān came from Bēt Nūhadrā but from the village of Ardamūth «which was far away from the River Zab»[26]. The village of Ardamūth today bears the name al-Kawasa[27], a fortified village in the mountains[28]. The same anonymous biography gives additional data. The monastery which Jōḥannān founded was situated in the mountains of Qardū near the villages of Raghūl and Nassūr. A monastery had actually existed there and it had belonged to a certain monk with the name Jaʿqūb *ʾabīlā*. This is the institution which he

[20] COLLESS, «The Biographies of John Saba», p. 45ff.

[21] *Le livre de la chasteté*, p. 225ff. The section bearing the number 126 is devoted to Jōḥannān of Dalyatā. The same text has been re-edited in *Liber superiorum*, ed. BEDJAN, p. 437ff. Here the section bearing the number 127 is devoted to Jōḥannān of Dalyatā.

[22] *Le livre de la chasteté*, p. 66f.

[23] He is reported to have been in a close contact with a Stephanos, a disciple of Mār Jaʿqōb Ḥazzāyā and Rabban Aphnimaran.

[24] It is told here that Šelemōn of Ḥedatā for a while tried to share the rigor of his ascetic practices with him. This took place before he was elevated to episcopal honor. His elevation must have taken place before the year 790 since he was involved in the tumultuous aftermath of the election of Patriach Timotheos. About this story, see TUMA, *Historia monastica*, p. 198f.

[25] *Studia Syriaca*, ed. RAHMANI I, p. 33f.

[26] Rahmani translated, «ad certam distantiam a flumine Zab» but it is misleading since the Syriac text reads: «far away».

[27] YĀQŪT, *Muʿjam al-Buldan* IV, p. 48. He says that the location is east of Mosul. Actually the village is north and northeast of Mosul, FIEY, *Assyrie chrétienne* II, p. 694.

[28] YĀSĪN AL-ʿOMARĪ, *Meeniat al-Udabā*, p. 54.

renewed. It is stated here that Jōḥannān composed letters and discourses on asceticism and sent them to his brother[29].

Still another episode of his life has been recorded. It involves a conflict with the authorities of his church. Jōḥannān won a certain notoriety because his theological views evoked the wrath of the authorities of his church[30]. Catholicos Timotheos raised accusations against him at a synod and had him condemned[31].

This concludes all that is known about Jōḥannān's person and life. There is still another source, a hymn on the saints[32] which as an anonymous also includes Jōḥannān of Dālyāthā. However, it can offer no service to us because it is not an independent source; it rests on the work of Išō'denaḥ.

2. The Contribution of Isḥāq of Nineve

a. *Recollection of his Person*

Regarding the person and the life of Isḥāq of Nineve, there has been much confusion. The reason is this, that he has been often mixed up with Isḥāq of Antioch.

Trustworthy historical data[1] about Isḥāq's person and life have been scanty[2]. In view of the immense fame and reputation enjoyed by Isḥāq in the history of monasticism, it is strange that his life story has found only very limited treatment. The only author among known writers has been Išō'denaḥ who, in his work on monasticism[3], devoted a chapter to Isḥāq of Nineve[4]. In addition, there is an anonymous sketch of his life[5]. Of course, there is also a biography which has been added to the Arabic version of his writings[6]; however, it is an entireky worthless fabrication.

[29] *Studia syriaca*, ed. Rahmani I, p. 33f., 65.

[30] Išō'denaḥ, *Le livre de la chasteté* CXXI, p. 67.

[31] Patriach Timotheos I (790-823) condemned his writings together with those by Jōḥannān of Apamea and Jauseph Ḥazzāyā, 'Abdiso', *Nomocanon* IX, 6, ed. Mai, p. 329.

[32] Ms. Sachau Syr. 125, Sachau, *Verzeichnis* I, p. 234ff.

[1] Chabot, *De Isaaci Ninivitae vita.*

[2] Khalifé-Hachem, «Isaac de Ninive», col. 2041ff.

[3] *Le livre de la chasteté*, §125, éd. Chabot, p. 63.

[4] A new manuscript source appears in Ms.'Alqōš which has no signature; its measurements are 20 × 13,5cm. The work appears in a section which is covered by quire 16, fol. 1b-22, fol. 1b; the manuscript seems to come from the 18th or 19th cent. Another codex appears in Ms. Beirut St. Joseph 24.

[5] *Studia syriaca*, ed. Rahmani, p. 33.

[6] Assemani, *Bibliothecea orient.* I, p. 444f.

Išō'denaḥ's report does not include anything about Isḥāq's origin and background except that he was born in Bēt Qatrāyē. He introduces him on the stage of history as a man who was consecrated bishop of Nineve as the successor of Bishop Mōšē. The place of his consecration — it is mentioned too — took place in the Monastery of Bēt 'Abē. More important is the fact that it was Catholicos Gīwargī who consecrated him, for that brings in a chronological clue, the only one in the entire account. It is known that Catholicos Išō'yahb III, on his deathbed, recommended Gīwargī I as his successor[7]. We also know that Gīwargī was catholicos until the year 680/81.

Isḥāq's tenure in the episcopal post of Nineve was of very short duration. He stayed in office only five months; he then resigned, leaving his bishopric in trouble[8]. The attraction of the life of the solitaries had become irresistible to him and he went to live in the mountains. Išō'denaḥ says that he lived on the mountain of Matut, which surrounds Bēt Huzāyē, in solitude among the anchorites there. Išō'denaḥ also records the datum that he later left the anchorites and went to the Monastery of Rabban Šabūr. Of this period in the monastery, Išō'denaḥ can say no more than this: «He became exceedingly well acquainted with the divine writings». Eventually Isḥāq lost his eyesight.

Išō'denaḥ also mentions an action undertaken against Isḥāq's views. He says that Daniel, the Bishop of Bēt Garmai, resented certain things in his writings about which Išō'denaḥ says little more than that they were about «three things». Išō'denaḥ adds that, in his judgement, all this was caused by envy; Daniel also caused accusations to be brought against Jausep Ḥazzāyā, Jōḥannān of Apamea and Jōḥannān of Dalyathā.

Išō'denaḥ reports that Isḥāq had reached an advanced age before he departed from this transitory life. His earthly remains were buried in the Monastery of Šabūr where he had spent the final period in his life. This is the sketch of Isḥāq's life in Išō'denaḥ's work. It leaves the impression that the information available to him was very limited.

An anonymous sketch of Isḥāq's life fortunately is able to add certain additional items to this very general picture. This source, too, reports that Isḥāq was born in Bēt Qaṭrāyē but adds that he was a relative of Mār Gabriel Qaṭrāyā, «the commentator of the church»[9]. Of his earlier

[7] Išō'yahb died in 657/8.

[8] After the see had been vacant his successor, Sabrišō', was consecrated but he also resigned his office and became an anchorite.

[9] He was a prolific author and a teacher at the theological school of Seleucia, Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, p. 200f.

life, it is said that he had become well versed in the writings of the church as well as commentaries when he became a monk and teacher in his country. Regrettably, this statement is all too brief. Except for some comments about his ascetic habits, which may be no more than a bit of filling, little is said about this man after he resigned from office.

With regard to the impact of Isḥāq, a new source, namely a letter of Mār Jozadaq to his disciple Būsir in the Monastery of Mār Šabūr, presents a glowing personal testimony to the effect that Isḥāq had «filled your monastery with doctrine full of life».

As for the accusations raised against Isḥāq, a reflection comes to us in another Nestorian author who flourished in the ninth century, namely Ibn as-Salt, who wrote in Arabic and whose name is connected with excerpts from the works of Isḥāq[10]. Here we learn something new. In the third letter he tells us that the same bishop Daniel had written a refutation against certain views of Isḥāq[11].

Given the scarcity of information, efforts to discover possible autobiographical references and allusions to personal experiences in Isḥāq's own writings have been carried out[12]. These attempts have become futile. Everything that, upon first examination looked to be of promise, became elusive[13] in subsequent analysis.

b. *Isḥāq's Literary Legacy*

Isḥāq's literary legacy has established his fame as a teacher of asceticism and mysticism throughout centuries. It made such a forceful impact that it actually broke through the partition walls of confessional camps and Isḥāq's writings, therefore, occupy a special place in the history of ascetic and monastic literature.

Exact information about his literary works as they appear among the Syriac authors leaves much to be desired. Īšōʿdenaḥ reports that «he wrote books on the divine behavior of the solitaries»[1]. The anonymous vita is a little more concrete: «he wrote five volumes which are extant till now (full of) sweet doctrine»[2]. According to ʿAbdīšōʿ Isḥāq is reported to

[10] *Traités religieux, philosophiques et moraux*, éd. SBATH, p. 77ff.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 109.
[12] WENSINCK, *Mystic Treatises by Isaac of Nineveh*, p. XIXff.
[13] The reference to the experiences of a bishop in the desert, *De perfectione religiosa*, ed. BEDJAN, p. 249 which Wensinck takes as an autobiographical datum, is nothing else than a story with Aba Apphy, bishop of Oxyrhynchus taken from the Apophthegmata. See ʿENĀNIŠŌʿ, *The Book of Paradise*, ed. BUDGE I, p. 589.
[1] *Le livre de la chasteté*, p. 63.
[2] *Studia syriaca*, p. 33.

have produced seven volumes «on the spiritual life, on the divine mysteries and judgements and the temptations»[3].

Isḥāq's main work bears the title: «The book on the way of monasticism, asceticism and the naziritehood»[4]. It is a very extensive work, covering eighty-two sections[5], initiated by a cycle entitled: «Six treatises on the behavior of excellence»[6]. In the manuscript traditions, it appears as the first volume of the normal recension which, however, shows changes and variations. The whole work presents us with a huge convolutum, put together without any plan or system, and in which all sorts of writings have been thrown together. This kaleidoscopic variety includes symbolical diatribes, discourses, hortatory sections, question and answer sections, paraenetic tracts, epistolary treatises, pastoral counselings, apophthegmata materials and meditations. Consequently, it is a very complicated undertaking to enter the labyrinth of the manuscript traditions to try to track down the original arrangement of all these materials. Many sections have had an independent life, having been included in anthologies, florilegia and other collections of ascetic, spiritual and mystical writings. Even more complicated are the ways these segments are reflected in the history of preservation in the Arabic versions[7] which have survived in great quantities[8].

We are very fortunate that the very few manuscripts extant in Syriac[9] have been supplemented by new witnesses discovered in the Syrian Orient[10].

Another source[11] has preserved works of Isḥāq not yet edited. These begin with «Four *mēmrē* on knowledge»; unfortunately the first two have perished due to the mutilation of the manuscript. Bedjan says that he had seen a huge, almost complete manuscript in Urmiah which

[3] *Catalogus librorum eccl.* LXX, p. 104.
[4] ܟܬܒܐ ... ܕܥܠ ܐܘܪܚܐ ܕܕܝܪܝܘܬܐ ܕܫܒܩܘܬܐ ܘܢܙܝܪܘܬܐ. So as the title appears in Ms. Tübingen Or. quart. 1159; see ASSFALG, *Syrische Handschriften*, p. 40.
[5] *De perfectione religiosa*, ed. BEDJAN; the work was translated by WENSINCK, *Mystic Treatises by Isaac of Nineveh*; cf. BAUMSTARK, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, p. 223ff.
[6] The cycle concludes with this subscription.
[7] Ms. Vatican Syr. 198 is a Karšunī manuscript, ASSEMANI, *Catalogus* III, p. 427ff. The work here appears in 4 books and only the second and the third correspond with the Syriac text of which the first and the fourth do not appear to have counterparts in Syriac.
[8] GRAF, *Geschichte der christlich arabischen Literatur*.
[9] BAUMSTARK, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, p. 223f.
[10] Ms. Mardin Orth. 195, Ms. 418, Ms. 420, see VÖÖBUS, *Syriac Manuscripts*; Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 310; Ms. Mār Mattai 27 and Ms. Anḥel, a manuscript in folio size; it contains individual treatises.
[11] Ms. Paris Syr. 298; NAU, «Notices des manuscrits», p. 278.

permits one to fill out the lacunae. Some excerpts from the fourth *mēmrā* were edited by Bedjan[12] and also from a treatise under the title «On the contemplation of the mystery of the cross»[13].

Isḥāq's literary legacy includes another work under the title «The Book of Grace». This is a work which the handbooks of Syriac literature do not mention. Duval[14], Baumstark[15], Chabot[16], Ortiz de Urbina[17] and Baumstark[18] remain completely silent about its existence. No trace of it has survived in Arabic[19]. Under the title «Seven *mēmrē* from the Book of Grace», this work has emerged in a few manuscripts[20]. In order to express his ideas about asceticism and mysticism in work, Isḥāq chose a different form expression. He arranged it in the form of centuria[21]. It is a matter of gratitude that sources for this unknown work have now been discovered in their hiding places in the Syrian Orient[22].

As has already been stated, the writings of Isḥāq broke through the partition walls of the confessional folds. His works made deep inroads into west Syrian monasticism. Here his spiritual teachings were avidly received. Manuscripts which were copied in the Monophysite monasteries needed only minimal adjustments, namely, removing the names of authors who evoked objection[23].

The expansion of Isḥāq's writings in the west was very impressive. His works were translated into Greek[24], Latin[25], Slavic[26] and ancient Italian[27].

[12] *De perfectione religiosa*, p. XV.
[13] *Ibid.*, p. XVf.
[14] *Littérature syriaque.*
[15] *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, p. 223ff.
[16] *Littérature syriaque*, p. 104.
[17] *Patrologia syriaca*, p. 135f.
[18] «Syrische Literatur».
[19] GRAF, *Geschichte der christlich arabischen Literatur* I, p. 436ff.
[20] Ms. Tübingen Or. quart 1159, ASSFALG, *Syrische Handschriften*, p. 41; Ms. Vatican Syr. 562, VAN LANTSCHOOT, *Inventaire*, p. 88; Ms. Birmingham Mingana Syr. 151, MINGANA, *Catalogue*, col. 350.
[21] VÖÖBUS, «Eine neue Schrift von Isḥāq», p. 309ff.
[22] Ms. Mardin Orth. 195, Ms. 196, Ms. ~~420,~~ see VÖÖBUS, *Syriac Manuscripts*; Ms. Mar Mattai 27; Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 103 and Ms. 310.
[23] These few adjustments concern the elimination of names which were not acceptable to the Monophysite readers, like Theodore of Mopsvestia and Diodor of Tarsus.
[24] This version was made in the 9th cent. in the Laura of Saba in Palestine; The Greek text was edited by Theodoki, in 1770.
[25] Fragments in Latin appear in PL XLIV, ed. MIGNE, col. 919ff.
[26] The Philocalia, edited in Moscow in 1885.
[27] *Libro dell' abate Isaac de Syria de la perfectione de la vita contemplativa*, published in 1500 in Venice.

c. *General Character of his Thought*

Isḥāq has been regarded as a very great saint and a very great spiritual author. First of all, it is necessary to highlight certain characteristic features in his way of thinking.

It is advisable to begin these observations with his statement on the extraordinary importance of the solitaries. He writes: «The pride of Christ's church consists in the behavior of the solitaries»[1]. He interpreted this behavior in his own drastic way; the position he took was extremely radical. His attitude towards everything human and warm was harsh[2]. He presented an althogether negative attitude towards the really creative forces in monasticism, as manifested in activism and the enrichment of life and society through charitable work, educative and missionary efforts, as well as other constructive ways. His reaction to all of these creative activities was blunt — solitude was the only answer to all questions. His terse statement reads: «Love the ease of solitude rather than the satisfying of the hunger of the world and the converting of the multitude of heathen peoples from error to adoring God»[3].

Isḥāq wants to use the free will and he proclaims this very forcefully. In the very first treatise in his main work, this is emphatically brought out[4]. He could even write: «Man, therefore, may freely go so far as to say: all excellence of whatever ... are in the realm of free will»[5].

Common to all mystical authors is the trait of tolerance and Isḥāq follows in their train. His concrete advice is to be careful with literature which is harmful, material which should not belong to the reading materials of mystics. He writes: «And prudence against reading books which accentuate the difference between the confessions, with the aim of

[1] ܫܘܒܗܪܐ ܕܥܕܬܗ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܘܒܪܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܕܝܚܝܕܝܐ. *De perfectione religiosa*, p. 119.
[2] «One of the saints has said: it is not the aim of your discipline that you should appease the hungry and that your cell should become a place of congregation for strangers», *ibid.*, p. 385.
[3] ܐܚܘܒ ܒܛܠܢܐ ܕܫܠܝܐ : ܝܬܝܪ ܡܢ ܕܬܣܒܥ ܟܦܢܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ : ܘܬܗܦܘܟ ܥܡܡܐ ܣܓܝܐܐ ܕܚܢܦܐ ܡܢ ܛܘܥܝܝܐ ܠܣܓܕܬܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ, *ibid.*, p. 45.
[4] «Reason is the cause of freedom; and the fruit of both is liability to err; without the first, the second would not be», *ibid.*, p. 3.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 170.

causing schisms, thus providing the spirit of slander with a mighty weapon against the soul»[6].

Coming to the question of the sources which have nourished his ascetic and mystical thinking, it must be said that Isḥāq stays close to the older stream of ascetic traditions. He has richly used allegorization and symbolism[7], which played an important role in his scriptural studies. Isḥāq even claims that the scriptures have been his main source[8]. But this is an overstatement. As far as depth in the scriptural studies is concerned, Isḥāq remains far behind such authors as 'Aphrahaṭ[9] and Philoxenos[10].

From older authors, he takes over the scheme of three stages in describing the role of asceticism. The twelfth treatise begins with the statement: «There are three degrees which constitute the whole course of man: the degree of novitiate, the middle one, and that of perfection»[11]. The same threefold scheme is also formulated in different terms[12].

That Isḥāq had received stimuli from other ascetic and mystical authors is obvious whether he mentions these sources or remains silent about them. He cites Basilios several times but ignores that which Basilios really has to say in opposition to Isḥāq's most radical position. Once he quotes Pseudo-Dionysios Areopagita. It is clear that he has been more influenced by this source dealing with the classes of celestial beings as shown in a number of other places in his writings where he preferred to remain silent. Isḥāq's dependency on this source is evident.

He also used a work in connection with his mystical doctrine of crucifixion about which he has remained silent. According to him, this ascension to the cross consisted of two things: firstly, the crucifixion of the body, and in the second place, the ascension into contemplation[13]. The idea of the mysical crucifixion reminds us of the Book of

6 ܘܬܘܠܕܘܬܗ ܡܢ ܕܬܘܪܬܐ ܒܚܠܘܬܐ ܕܡܦܪܫܝܢ ܐܚ̈ܐ ܕܡܬܠܬܠܝܢ ܒܚܫܟܐ ܟܐܡܬܐ ܕܪܝܫܐ : ܕܗܘܢ ܡܚܝܡ ܥܠ ܢܦܫܐ ܙܝܢܐ ܕܐܟܠܩܪܨܐ ܬܬܚܝܠ, *ibid.*, p. 48.

7 Particularly baptism and the cross have received allegorical treatment but also the Sabbath and Sunday.

8 «This I have written to the profit of myself and of everyone who comes across this book, being that which I have attained by contemplation of the scriptures and from the mouth of veracious men», *ibid.*, p. 127.

9 See page 18ff.

10 See page 125ff.

11 *Ibid.*, p. 121.

12 The 74th discourse beings with the declaration: «The scope of the whole course consists in these three: repentance, purity and perfection», *ibid.*, p. 507.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 223.

Hierotheos[14] which uses this idea in connection with the ascent of the mind. Reminiscences of this work have been found in his writings[15].

Evagrios is introduced as a great authority, as «holy»[16], the «blessed Evagrios»[17] and «the sage among the saints»[18]. It is apparent that the writings of Evagrios have attracted Isḥāq. He quotes him a number of times by name and more frequently without mentioning him. But, as usual, all this is casual since Isḥāq was not attracted to his philosophical ideas.

Isḥāq appears to have been impressed even more by Jōḥannān of Apamea[19]. The idea of silence[20] has certainly been borrowed from Jōḥannān. In addition to certain esoteric ideas, in his religious and spiritual approach Isḥāq found a closer kinship with Jōḥannān.

Isḥāq must also have kept his eye on currents and movements in asceticism in bringing out his own reactions. This is the case with the movement of the Messallians. He takes the strong position that even the perfect ones have no guarantee against deviation. Here he has taken a clear position against the tenet of this movement[21].

With regard to stimuli, and incentives from various sources, it must be said that Isḥāq did not have the patience to deal with them very closely. He was not of a mind to follow these threads or thoughts consistently at the level of learned treatment on the issues of spirituality and mysticism because he felt the urgency and pressure of the predilections of his psyche for the extremes of ascetic life.

In assessing Isḥāq's place in the history of asceticism and mysticism, it must be said that he is closer in many ways to ancient Syrian ascetic traditions than to later notions. He is not mesmerized by the speculative and philosophical developments in the treatment of ascetic and mystical issues. He finds what he needs in sources not affected by these trends and modifies them according to his own tenets.

14 See page 159.

15 MARSH, «Possible Reminiscences of the Book of Hierotheos», in: *The Book Which is Called the 'Book of the Holy Hierotheos'*, p. 251ff.

16 *De perfectione religiosa*, p. 497.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 443, 456, 495, 513.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 106.

19 See page 101ff.

20 «Silence is a symbol of the future world; speech is an organ of this world», *ibid.*, p. 470.

21 «Do not think that the perfect should be exempt from varying states and that they stay in one class, without liability of deviation and without the impulse of the affections, as the Messallians say», *ibid.*, p. 495.

d. *Isḥāq's Throughtworld*

When approaching Isḥāq's salient ideas[1], one should begin with his understanding of repentance. For him, repentance is awakening, a new birth in which baptism receives its true meaning[2]. However, true repentance takes place only through the avenue which foresees life in solitude and the system of ascetic practices. Just how important this is appears in the following passage: «If you love repentance, then love also solitude; for without this, repentance cannot be completed»[3]. That which is here expressed is an absolute demand[4]. He cannot think otherwise. As a result, he cannot amass arguments enough to praise the advantages of the life in solitude: it is a place to forget the world, it provides seclusion, quietness, a place to find oneself, to avoid distraction and to attain concentration[5]. Without solitude, the soul cannot be purified from the affections[6]. At the end of the treatise with the title: «On the course of the solitary career», he brings all his observations to their crescendo: all spiritual growth and attainment in ascetic and mystical wisdom can come only from one place — solitude[7]. Isḥāq expects of solitude far more than a purification of the soul: it is the only gate which leads into the higher world.

Solitude for Isḥāq involves the ascetic practices which are absolutely related to it: «Bodily labors are called bodily[8] discipline unto God; for they serve for the purification of the body through the service of excellence which is manifest in personal works, by which man is purified from the pus of the flesh»[9]. The spiritual part of the ascetic grows only as

[1] WENSINCK, «A Sketch of Isaac's Mystical Ideas», in: *Mystic Treatises of Isaac of Nineveh*, p. XXIIIff.

[2] «That of which we have received the pledge of baptism, we receive as a gift by repentance», *De perfectione religiosa*, p. 315.

[3] ܐܢ ܪܚܡ ܐܢܬ ܬܝܒܘܬܐ : ܪܚܡ ܐܦ ܫܠܝܐ. ܠܒܪ ܡܢܗ ܓܝܪ : ܠܐ ܡܫܬܡܠܝܐ ܬܝܒܘܬܐ, *ibid.*, p. 462.

[4] Isḥāq calls solitude the father of repentance, *ibid.*

[5] When the disciple asks the teacher to state succinctly «the power of the practice of solitude», then the answer is: «it mortifies the outward senses and quickens the inward impulses», *ibid.*, p. 247.

[6] « When a man has found solitude, the soul is able to expel the affections», *ibid.*, p. 244.

[7] «Stay therefore in your cell and the cell will teach you everything», *ibid.*, p. 130.

[8] ܦܓܪܢܝܐ.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 303f.

the bodily needs are curtailed. This takes place in the struggle against various passions. In order to carry out this battle, the ascetic must follow the method of monastic discipline which had been crystallized throughout the history of the monastic movement. This consists of all the proven means: fasting, vigils and psalmody. A discourse devoted to the theme: «The short path towards God» begins with the following statement: «Do not think, o man, that among all the works of ascetics[10] there is anything greater and more profitable than that of vigils»[11]. Isḥāq warns: «Do not make your heart heavy[12] and dark by sleep»[13]. He issues strong warnings not to sleep[14]. Here Isḥāq is extremely radical. On other ascetic practices, he follows more or less what he found in the tradition.

With regard to the attitude toward work, Isḥāq grudgingly must concede that all ascetics cannot endure solitude without work. As a concession — but admittedly wit stern reluctance — light work is allowed, but he emphasizes that this concession is made only for the weak ones. Here he calls upon Evagrios as witness to underline his position: manual work is a impediment to the recollection of God[15].

The life and struggle in this corporeal phase is something in which everything is initial, inchoate and initiatory. Isḥāq characterizes this stage to a young bird without wings — all efforts to elevate itself above remain futile[16]. But by way of encouragement, there are stimuli for this arduous road. The first virtue in this stage is the fear of God. It is born in the heart after the renouncement of the world. And this virtue brings with it positive incentives. The very first treatise in his main work makes the following programatic statement: «The fear of God is the foundation of excellence; for excellence is said to be the offspring of faith. It is sown in a man's heart when he allows his mind to confine the wandering impulses to continual meditation on the order of things to come, away from the distractions of the world»[17].

[10] The Syriac term used here is: ܥܢܘܘܬܐ.

[11] *ibid.*, p. 134.

[12] Lit.: «thick».

[13] ܘܡܠܒܫܕ ܠܠܒܟ : ܠܐ ܬܥܒܐ ܘܬܚܫܟ ܒܗ ܫܢܬܐ, *ibid.*, p. 138.

[14] «I advise you to sit in solitude, awake, if you are able to do this, without recitation of psalms and without prostrations ... but do not sleep», *ibid.*, p. 138.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 57.

[16] «At the time of prayer it strives to exalt itself above earthly things, but it cannot», *ibid.*, p. 92. «For he does not yet percieve the air of peace and liberty», *ibid.*

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 1.

The transition from the stage of repentance to the next and higher one takes place through purification. This is the psychic[18] stage which has to do with the purification of the soul. Here it is a struggle against the adversary thoughts. Ascetic practices, discipline, perseverance in ascetic acts, intensification in the means of self-denial, these prepare the ascetic for the stage which is suitable for deeper growth. We have to do with the struggle against affections[19]. This is most difficult and dangerous since the enemy is elusive and subtle and the struggle full of peril. In describing the dangers which take place in this struggle, Isḥāq does not speak only of the senses of the body[20] but he speaks also of the senses of the soul. He also views the heart as an organ with inward senses. All this is complicated by the impulses and emotions[21]. The constant struggle in this stage[22] instills the awareness that if the solitary ceases for even a short time from meditating on spiritual writings or from thinking divine things, he is in danger of being swept away by the affections.

Isḥāq understands progress in purification to occur in two stages. This is brought out at the beginning of the fortieth discourse: «Mental discipline makes the soul humble and purifies it from the material impulses that tend towards decayed things, by changing their affectable nature into motions of contemplation»[23]. When this is accomplished, the premises are created for further progress in purification. The soul becomes able to move beyond the external incitements towards its original stage[24].

Now the purified soul is able to perform functions which it was not able to carry out previously. Particularly important in this spiritual growth is the attainment of pure prayer. The question: what is prayer? is answered in the following way: «The mind's being free from all that is earthly and the heart's turning its gaze completely towards the desire of

[18] ܢܦܫܢܝܐ.

[19] ܚ̈ܫܐ.

[20] ܪ̈ܓܫܐ.

[21] ܪ̈ܗܒܐ.

[22] «Righthand and lefthand deliberations are stirred equally in it», *ibid.*, p. 122.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 303.

[24] «When the waters from without do not enter the fountain of the soul, its natural waters will arise viz. the wonderful intuitions which are moving towards God at all time», *ibid.*, p. 20.

future hope»[25]. In this way Isḥāq describes the supreme form of prayer which he calls pure prayer[26].

In this struggle, encouragement comes from various sides which point to the right direction in the movement of these endeavors and toils. One is the fervor that inflames the heart. Isḥāq speaks of this kindled fervor of heart as follows: «In solitude there is warmth blazing and immeasurable heat, which is generated in the heart by fervent deliberations»[27]. The other sign is the appearance of the tears. The tears are spoken of as a sign of the transition from the corporeal to the spiritual stage[28]; in this stage they gain in importance. Isḥāq describes with affection the beginning of such outbursts and the growth of this experience as it develops into a habit[29]. When the disciple asks Isḥāq his occupation in solitude should be «lest his intellect should be found to be occupied with accidental deliberations», the answer given to this question is a question: «What can the meditation of the solitary in his cell be but weeping?»[30]. This answer is strengthened by the argument: «And even his name turns him into this direction — for he is called *'abīlā*[31], which means bitter in heart»[32]. For Isḥāq, this is the true sign of all the saints[33]. Constant weeping is necessary for the growth of the internal man since it is a protection against the affections[34].

Such are the labors and toils which lead to the restitution of the authentic nature of the soul, the return to the original state in which it was created[35]. The soul becomes pure and free of all the passions and thus the image of God in man[36]. Such a state of integrity by Isḥāq is

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 508.

[26] KHALIFÉ-HACHEM, «La prière pure et la prière spirituelle selon Isaac de Ninive», p. 157ff.

[27] *De perfectione religiosa*, p. 87.

[28] «Tears are to the mind the sure distinction between the bodily and the spiritual state», *ibid.*, p. 245.

[29] «At first partial ones; this means that a man's tears will flow several times every day; then he will come to (the state of) tears without a break», *ibid.*, p. 128.

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 251.

[31] ܐܒܝܠܐ, «a mourner».

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 252.

[33] «All the righteous have departed his world with weeping. If the saints would weep and their mouths at all times were filled with their tears and they thus departed this world, who should not weep then?», *ibid.*, p. 252.

[34] «For if anyone weeps constantly, the affections will not approach his heart; for weeping lies beyond affectability», *ibid.*, p. 253.

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 184.

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

described as impassibility. That is the acme on this arduous road of spirituality. The seventy-fourth discourse raises this question: What is apathy? The definition given reads as follows: «It is not (the state) that does not perceive the affections but that which does not accept them»[37]. For Isḥāq apathy is a spiritual victory, the epitomy of all labors and toils.

All of these laborious inward struggles, ceaseless acts of purification and deeper preparations[38] gradually leave behind the psychic stage and the mystic reaches the third stage — the stage of perfection. This is the sphere of spirituality[39]. It is the sphere where the mystic belongs. Here rewards and divine gifts appear. They are destined for the soul which has reached the stage of serenity and spiritual intensity. Prayer takes on a different complexion, intensified as it is by new spiritual gifts. Isḥāq explains what is involved here in a dialogue between the disciple and the teacher. The disciple poses the question: «What is the acme of all the labors of asceticism[40] which a man, when he has reached it, recognizes as the summit of his course?» The teacher answers: «When he is deemed worthy of constant prayer»[41].

Contemplation also takes on new dimensions. Moments of spiritual elation heighten its intensity. Such experiences lead toward illumination. In this realm, Isḥāq is in his element. His descriptions become more and more exuberant. Sources of abundant light begin to flow[42]. Isḥāq's cravings belong to the experiences which are on the borderline between the normal and abnormal in psychic phenomena[43]. He speaks of the hidden mysteries which now become manifest[44]. Isḥāq finds delight in

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 513.
[38] «Neither does the spirit want to look at them every time, because at all times its emotion is filled with meditation and intercourse with excellent thoughts», *ibid.*, p. 513.
[39] ܪܘܚܢܘܬܐ.
[40] In Syriac: ܕܘܒܪܬܐ.
[41] ܠܫܘܠܡܐ. ܡܢܘ ܣܘܟܐ ܕܟܠܗܘܢ ܥܡܠܐ ܕܕܘܒܪܐ ܕܟܕ ܠܗ ܡܛܐ ܐܢܫ: ܐܡܪ: ܡܬܬܘܕܥ ܕܫܘܠܡܗ ܕܪܗܛܗ ܥܠ. ܡܐ ܕܐܫܬܘܝ ܠܡܨܠܝܢܘܬܐ ܐܡܝܢܬܐ, *ibid.*, p. 259.
[42] «The intelligible light which by grace dawns in the soul», *ibid.*, p. 376.
[43] «And from purity of deliberations (springs) inward light; and from here the mind is guided by grace towards that which it is not allowed to the senses either to teach or to learn», *ibid.*, p. 17.
[44] «This light will show the spiritual eyes of the soul the hidden mysteries which are in the soul, and the secret riches of divinity which are concealed from the eyes of fleshly men», *ibid.*, p. 376.

rapture and paroxysm[45], in the state of intoxication[46] and spiritual drunkenness[47]. All such experiences find their celebrations in ecstasy[48]. Utterances concerning ecstasy appear very frequently and it is not necessary here to spend more time on them. It suffices to say that according to these descriptions, such experiences, for the most part, spring from pure prayer.

[45] «Then there arises in him that sweetness of God and the flame of His love which burns in the heart and kindles all the affections of body and soul», *ibid.*, p. 337.
[46] «From time to time he will become drunk by it as by wine; his limbs will relax, his mind will stand still and his heart will follow God as a captive», *ibid.*, p. 337f.
[47] «The mind is absorbed in ecstasy and the desired object of prayer is forgotten; the impulses are drawn in a heavy drunkenness and man is no longer in this world», *ibid.*, p. 174.
[48] «Sometimes from prayer a certain contemplation is born which also makes prayer vanish from the lips. And he to whom this contemplation happens becomes as a corpse without soul, in ecstasy», *ibid.*, p. 164.

XIV. MONASTICISM IN THE LIGHT OF THE LEGISLATIVE SOURCES

1. The Canons of Ja'qōb of Edessa

a. *The Sources*

In the creation of canonical materials a very famous name is Jaʿqōb of Edessa. In his person there appeared the greatest light in the heavens of Syrian scholarship.

About 684 A. D. — the chronology is uncertain here[1] — Jaʿqōb was elevated to the episcopacy by the Patriarch Athanasios II[2]. This, however, was only a brief episode in his life. His rule as a bishop was to last no longer than four years since he could not endure the frictions that embittered his work. He was also perturbed by the spirit of laxity towards the authority of the canons that he found prevalent in the church[3]. As a protest against this spirit, he burned a codex containing the canons and resigned. He withdrew to the monastery to Kaišūm, and continued his career as a celebrated scholar in Greek scholarship there. Later he was active in the Monastery of Eusebōnā, and finally in the Monastery of Tell ʿAdā[4]. When the church of Edessa asked him to resume his duties some twenty years later, he consented[5] but this time his tenure was even more brief. Death ended his life on June 5, 708[6].

As has already been said, in the person of Jaʿqōb of Edessa there appeared the greatest light in the heavens of Syrian scholarship. Even an enumeration of the areas which he cultivated indicates the magnitude of

[1] Pseudo-Dionysios gives the year 676/7, *Chronique syriaque de Denys de Tell-Mahré*, ed. Chabot, p. 9.

[2] He ruled between 683/4-686 according to Michael Syrus, *Chronique*, p. 445.

[3] Bar ʿEbrāyā, *Chronicon ecclesiasticum* I, col. 289f.

[4] Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,429, fol. 90a testifies to the fact that Jaʿqōb was there in the year 705 A. D., and had started the revision of the Books of Samuel and the Kings. Further, Ms. Paris Syr. 27, fol. 148a tells us that the revision of the Book of Daniel was prepared in the year 1016 A. Gr., i.e. 705 A. D. in the Monastery of Tell ʿAdā.

[5] Bar ʿEbrāyā reports that Jaʿqōb resigned for the second time, *Chronicon ecclesiasticum* I, col. 293. See also his vita in Ms. Damascus Patr. 12/18, fol. 446-486.

[6] Thus Eliyā bar Šīnaya, *Opus chronologicum*, ed. Brooks-Chabot, p. 158; also Bar ʿEbrāyā. However, Pseudo-Dionysios gives the year 709/10 A. D., *Chronique syriaque*, p. 12.

his contribution: textual criticism of the Bible, liturgy, theology, philosophy, historiography and science. His many-sided Graeco-Syro translation work, beginning with the Greek theological and liturgical writings and ending with Greek classical philosophical works, has fertilized the Aramaic thoughtworld with the best in Hellenism.

From Jaʿqōb, we have in our possession a larger number of canons and canonical resolutions. That which has been preserved in the Nomocanon of Bar ʿEbrāyā has become widely known. Of these canons, a critical edition[7] is available based on a number of manuscripts[8] including unknown manuscript sources which have been ferreted out in the Syrian Orient[9].

b. *The canons*

1. It is not lawful for a monk to take the answers[1] from the gospel or from David (of the Psalter) or from the portion (or lot) called the Apostolos.

2. It is not lawful for the stylites to celebrate[2] the eucharist on their columns[3].

3. It is also not lawful for the recluses to celebrate[4] the eucharist, except in (case of) necessity[5].

4. It also is not lawful that the sacred body shall be placed near the stylites on the column, if there is someone to offer to them the eucharist.

5. Monks who have laid aside (the monastic habit) and have taken wives, shall not put on monastic garments.

6. A monk shall not kill an animal.

7. Monks who by force have been driven to cast stones by (war) machines[6] shall not be blamed under (the law of the) canons.

8. Monks shall not go to the vigils or commemoration of the martyrs or feasts, not even under the pretext to pray there.

[7] *Syriac and Arabic Documents*, ed. Vööbus, p. 95f.

[8] About them, see *ibid.*, page 94.

[9] Ms. Šarfeh Syr. 4/4 and Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 460.

[1] Or.: «divine».

[2] Lit.: «offer».

[3] Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,493, fol. 181b adds here: «Nor shall they make gatherings at them».

[4] Lit.: «offer».

[5] Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,493, fol. 181b adds here: «Or in the neighborhood no men are found who may reach the eucharist to them».

[6] ܡܓܓܢܝܩܘܣ, «an engine for hurling stones», «a balista», μαγγανικός.

9. A stylite who rises up against the pious one[7], and writes anathemas to his diocesans, shall be anathematized; and everyone who accepts his anathema, shall be anathematized[8].

10. Also (when) an abbot and the monks make a party[9], that is, convocations against the bishop and do not obey him, (they) shall be deposed until they turn away from this unpraiseworthy mind; and if they acknowledge the canon, they shall be received (into the communion).

11. Monks! Women shall not enter your monasteries!

2. The Canons of Ja'qōb of Edessa in Their Independent Tradition

a. *The Sources*

It is a great advantage for historical research and to our knowledge regarding Jaʿqōb's contribution to ecclesiastical legislation that it is not bound to the codification work of Bar ʿEbrāyā. The sources for canonical materials created by the famous bishop of Edessa flow freely.

The most important source in these materials and the most extensive to be recovered is Ms. Mardin Orth. 310[1] of the eighth century. This cycle embraces thirty canons[2]. This venerable record has a companion which is as old[3] and another one which, however, is a recent copy[4].

Our search in the Syrian Orient has been crowned even with a crop of unknown manuscript sources which lead us to other currents and subcurrents in the preservation of these legislative materials[5].

A different form of the cycle is somewhat short. It has been preserved in Ms. Damascus Patr. 8/11[6]. This particular version has been included

[7] ܚܣܝܐ, «a pious one», «a holy one» i.e. ecclesiastical superior, a bishop.

[8] This last clause does not appear in Ms. Vatican Syr. 358, fol. 87a.

[9] ܟܢܘܫ.

[1] Fol. 191a-195b.

[2] The cycle appears here as a continuation of the *šū'ālē-pūnāyē* sent for Addai, numbered from 74 to 102.

[3] Ms. Harvard 85, fol. 18a-25a.

[4] Ms. Birmingham Mingana Syr. 8, fol. 231a-236a. The codex was copied in the year 1911 A.D., Mingana, *Catalogue* I, col. 36f. The cycle displays a different arrangement.

[5] Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 73, fol. 256a-261b of the year 1911 A.D.; Ms. Mardin Orth. 322, fol. 184a-190a; Ms. Mardin Orth. 327, fol. 159b-166a; Ms. Mardin Orth. 337, fol. 117b-121a, and Ms. Damascus Patr. 8/1, fol. 193a-200a.

[6] Fol. 120a-121a.

in the Synodicon of the West Syrian tradition[7]. It is a cycle which does not include all the canons and those which have been included have been reduced.

Another form of this collection has long been known[8]. However, it has been arranged on the basis of preferential selection and cannot give us the information this work requires.

Still another type of this cycle is found in Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,493[9], a witness which comes from the tenth century[10]. This cycle, too, has been arranged by a process of selection and the canons have been somewhat shortened. However, the main section which concerns this work has been retained[11].

Only a part of these canonical materials has been edited[12]. The rest has been awaiting a critical edition[13].

b. *The canons*

The sections which concern the present study follow immediately[1].

Canon 8. The stylites are not allowed to consecrate the eucharist on their columns, and arrange gatherings around them.

Canon 9. The reclusi[2] are not allowed to consecrate the eucharist, except only in an emergency situation when no one is in the vicinity to bring them the sacrament.

Canon 30. Historically speaking, the canon brings up signs of decline.

It is directed against the monks who have lost their status, have taken wives and dwell in the villages: «For many of these, who have so fallen, even go out and go begging in the name of the monasteries of the monks although they have wives; those who have returned to the world shall wear white garments»[3].

[7] *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition* I, ed. Vööbus, p. 269ff.

[8] Ms. Cambr. Add. 2023, fol. 275b-277b of the 13th cent., Wright-Cook, *Catalogue* II, p. 600.

[9] Fol. 181b.

[10] Wright, *Catalogue* I, p. 219.

[11] However, Can. 30 has been left out from the cycle.

[12] Kayser, *Kanones Jacob's von Edessa*, p. 2ff.; a French translation was prepared by Nau, *Canons et résolutons*, p. 66f.

[13] *Syriac and Arabic Documents*, ed. Vööbus, p. 95f.

[1] These canons have been summarized by their content.

[2] ܚܒܝܫܐ.

[3] ܣܓܝܐܐ ܓܝܪ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܕܗܟܢܐ ܢܦܠܘ. ܐܦ ܒܫܡܐ ܕܥܘܡܪܐ ܕܕܝܪܝܐ ܢܦܩܝܢ ܘܚܕܪܝܢ ܟܕ ܐܝܬ ܠܗܘܢ ܢܫܐ. ܗܢܘܢ ܕܝܢ ܕܐܬܦܢܝܘ ܠܥܠܡܐ ܢܦܩܝܢ ܡܐܢܐ ܚܘܪܐ ܠܒܫܝܢ.

3. Canonical Resolutions by Ja'qōb of Edessa

The Sources and Resolutions

It is, indeed, a matter of some advantage for our inquiry that certain supplemental data come from another genre of legislative creation in Jaʿqōb's legacy. This has to do with the branch devoted to the *šūa'lē-pūnāyē* resolutions[1]. Jaʿqōb has devoted loving care to it.

The cycle of resolutions sent to Addai[2] has been preserved in a mode containing several ramifications[3]. This cycle represents a long list of his canonical resolutions[4] on liturgical, religious, communal and social aspects. The learned author dwells with affection particularly on issues which involve the cult, ritual and liturgy; occasionally the resolutions focus on other matters which are even more welcome for the present inquiry.

Pūnāyā 24. In a convent of nuns where there is no priest or deacon, the deaconess is allowed to take the sacrament from the cabinet of the eucharist.

Pūnāyā 35. The use of «books of the moon and thunder» are forbidden as they are forbidden for clergy and laypeople.

Pūnāyā 54. It is not allowed an anchorite to live together with an heterodox anchorite.

Pūnāyā 55. An anchorite is not allowed to enter into discussion with heretics.

Pūnāyā 57. When an emir invites the abbot to eat with him this must be understood as an emergency situation.

Pūnāyā 61. Monks as well as clerics are allowed to participate in the funeral processions of heterodox Christians.

The most extensive cycle of his canonical resolutions[5] contains omissions for which new resolutions are introduced by way of compensation.

Pūnāyā 73. The resolution deals with the question whether it is a sin to obey when the Arabs compel monks and clerics to take part in war actions.

[1] Vööbus, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen* I, 1, p. 273ff.

[2] Ms. Paris Syr. 62, fol. 273a-284b, of the 9th cent., Zotenberg, *Catalogue*, p. 28; Ms. Cambridge Add. 2023, fol. 259a-275b, of the 13th cent., Wright-Cook, *Catalogue*, p. 600.

[3] Vööbus, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen* I, 1, p. 274ff.

[4] *Reliquiae juris eccl.*, ed. Lagarde, p. 117ff., *Dissertatio de fide*, p. 98ff.

[5] Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 234, fol. 1a-20a, of the 18th cent.

Pūnāyā 105. Monks are forbidden to kill animals.

Another branch[6] in the spectrum of canonical resolutions has preserved some of the new ordinances[7].

Pūnāyā 117. According to this liturgical ordinance the abbots, so also the *sūʿārē* and the priests are not allowed to take the eucharist from the altar, but a priest must distribute the sacrament.

Pūnāyā 125. Monks are not allowed to take over sponsorship as so many have made of it a custom. The same resolution forbids the monks to take part in the festivals of the saints, commemorations and banquets, or to sing and keep vigils there. This sounds better in English, keep vigils there and sing there.

There is still another source for these materials. The resolutions sent to Jōḥannān 'Esṭūnārā[8] have been preserved only in a single witness, one which has survived solely because of the fact that it was included in the Synodicon of the West Syrian tradition[9].

Pūnāyā 9. Is it necessary for the doors of the church to be closed on the day when the eucharist is offered?

Jaʿqōb: «This is necessary and especially so that the perverts to Islam will not enter and mingle with the believers, disturb them and laugh at the holy mysteries».

Still another cycle of canonical resolutions sent to the same Jōḥannān has emerged in a very precious manuscript[10] which also owes its preservation to the fact that it was included in the Synodicon of the West Syrian tradition[11].

Pūnāyā 4. It regulates the question how it is proper to handle the eucharist with respect to the stylites. If there are people in the near vicinity, it is not necessary to place the eucharist near them on the column.

Pūnāyā 5. The resolution deals with the issue that the stylites give proclamations or admonitions to the people, administer judgements and

[6] Ms. Harvard Har. 85, fol. 84a-85a, of the 8th cent. Goshen-Gottstein, *Syriac Manuscripts*, p. 75. In general this cycle agrees with Ms. Mardin Orth. 310, fol. 29b-33b.

[7] Vööbus, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen* I, 1, p. 284ff.

[8] Ms. Damascus Patr. 8/11, fol. 100a-114a.

[9] *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition* i, ed. Vööbus, p. 233ff.

[10] Ms. Damascus Patr. 8/11, fol. 110a-114a.

[11] *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition*, p. 245ff.

decree laws. Ja'qōb's answer is: «If they want to be teachers and admonishers of the people, this should only be through silent exhortation, so that through good deed and example they may become teachers to the people, and not by talk and noise — because the deed has much more excellence than towards admonition».

Pūnāyā 4. The monks are forbidden to perform baptism «even if it should happen that sponsors and God-parents for him who is to be baptized could not be found».

Monks are forbidden to go to the vigils or to the commemorations of the saints or to the banquets, or to keep vigils there and sing there.

Finally, another ramification of the resolutions has been awaiting introduction. This has been preserved in an ancient manuscript[12] which has preserved the cycle sent to the same Jōḥannān 'Esṭūnārā of the village of Litarb. This cycle can add another interesting splinter.

Pūnāyā 12. Monks are allowed to participate in the processions of the Chalcedonians.

4. The Canons of Gīwargī the Bishop of the Arabs

a. *The Sources*

Gīwargī is a name well known in the history of Syriac literature and the Syrian church. He occupies a special place among the illustrious scholars and authors of the Syrian tongue[1]. In 686[2] — or according to another tradition two months after the death of Patriarch Athanasius[3] — he was elevated to the episcopacy. There he was active untill his death in 724.

His diocese was not an ordinary one in several respects. First of all, his flock did not consist of Syrians but of Arabs who had been drawn into the orbit of Syrian Christianity in happier times when the mission was growing[4]. Most of his spiritual subjects did not know a settled life[5].

[12] Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,493, fol. 148b-158a of the 10th cent., Wright, *Catalogue* I, p. 219.

[1] Vööbus, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen* I,1,A, p. 216ff.

[2] See Ryssel, *Georgs des Araberbischofs Gedichte und Briefe*, p. xv.

[3] Athanasius died on the 11th of Ilul in the year 998 A.Gr., Michael Syrus, *Chronique*, p. 474.

[4] See page 231ff.

[5] The spiritual flock consisted of those Arab tribes who lived as nomads in tents along the fruitful districts of the Syrian and Mesopotamia borders and areas at the Euphrates.

In all of his writings, Gīwargī appears to be an exponent of the best that contemporary Syrian culture could offer. His works are marked with a wide horizon, a many-sidedness in scholarship.

According to his own admission, Gīwargī was keenly interested in monasticism[6].

This particular interest in monasticism is manifested, too, in the canons through which he has made his own contribution to the legacy of monastic legislation.

Unfortunately, his canons in their original form have not survived except for the part that was incorporated in the codification work by Bar 'Ebrāyā[7]. The text of these canons is available in a critical edition[8] resting on the earliest manuscripts[9]. Unknown older manuscripts[10] from the Syrian Orient have enriched this company of witnesses.

b. *The Canons*

1. By God's excommunication we have ordered that the monks who carry bags and reliquiaries[1] of saints and who are roaming around, shall not be received.

2. It is not permitted the abbots and the stylites to write the letters of excommunications or judgements or those of admonitions to the towns and villages.

3. Monks who make the present because of abbacy shall be anathematized.

4. An abbot shall not be appointed without the order[2] of the bishop.

5. An abbot who revolts against his bishop and stops[3] the recitation[4] (of his name in the liturgy) shall be anathematized.

[6] *Analecta syriaca*, p. 133.

[7] *Nomocanon*, p. 113.

[8] *Syriac and Arabic Documents*, ed. Vööbus, p. 99.

[9] About the earliest manuscripts see page 352f.

[10] About these unknown sources, see *ibid.*

[1] ܓܠܘܣܩܡܐ, «coffins», «shrines», γλωσσόκομον.

[2] Lit.: «commandment».

[3] Lit.: «cuts off».

[4] ܟܪܘܙܘܬܐ, «heralding», «proclamation», «commemoration of ecclesiastical dignitaries».

5. The Canons of Anonymous Origin

a. *The Source*

A cycle of canons on the monastic life has not survived in its original language but only in a version of a very strange and difficult Arabic dialect, preserved in a Karšuni manuscript. However, these rules must have existed in Syriac since the language, choice of words and terminology used in this cycle reveal the Syriac substratum which shines through the Arabic idiom with an undimmed luster.

The record besides the very general title, «the canons»[1], has no other title. It has been preserved in the only witness which appears in Ms. Vatican Syr. 159[2]. The codex is not old[3].

The text of this collection of canons has been edited[4].

The cycle consists of twenty canons which deal with various issues regarding the ascetic life, the monastic community and the ordinances for administration and the rules for daily duties as well as prescriptions even in matters of etiquette. Occasionally, we are informed about other regulations in this collection which does not stand out as a consistent and logically structured composition.

The cycle is of an anonymous provenance. Nothing can be elicited about its background. All that can be inferred is this, that the collection bears the imprint of a compilation. Particularly in the last part do the signs of suture become noticeable. It has become evident that the Persian canons on monasticism have served as a source of inspiration for a number of canons[5]. This becomes particularly clear in the last rules. The concluding portion, indeed, rests on a collection of the rules designed for the monks in Persia[6].

Whether this source has been transmitted through intermediary channels, something which is altogether possible in this genre of literature, cannot be determined.

With regard to the question of the origin of this cycle, it is useless even to attempt to say anything. There was a time when certain vague

1 ܩܘܐܢܝܢ.
2 Fol. 132a-132b.
3 The manuscript comes from the year 1642 A.D. Assemani, *Catalogus* III, p. 314.
4 *Syriac and Arabic Documents*, ed. Vööbus, p. 110ff.
5 Vööbus, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen* I,1,B, p. 398f.
6 Can. 15-20 are the same as found in the cycle of Canons 21-25 of the Persians.

indications seemed to give some encouragement[7], however, upon closer scrutiny these indications have shown themselves to be utterly elusive.

b. *The canons*

1. If someone longs for the monastic life, the bishop must make investigations regarding where he is from and the reasons why he desires to become a monk.

2. If he is a free man, a son of believers and under the tutelage of his father, he shall not be received except with the consent of his parents.

3. A secular shall not be received except with the permission of his bishop unless he is attached to a wife or that he has children or that there are other impediments; for the care of his wife and his children and his place among them is superior to the monastic life, and more acceptable to God. Whoever transgresses this rule shall be excommunicated.

4. Monk, if in your sickness you have a necessity to enter in a bathhouse, enter (no more than) twice or thrice.

5. If you eat meat in your sickness, do not regard this as a sin, but sadden yourself — you have undergone a defeat because your virtue is reduced by this slip — for a monk is not to eat meat either in his sickness or without sickness.

6. A monk shall not grow hair on his head; on the contrary, he shall shave it all off, and shall not leave on his head a crown of hair.

7. (A monk) shall not put a ring on his finger, neither of gold nor of silver nor of anything else.

8. Monks of the monasteries if they have an option can eat only twice a day: the first at the sixth (hour) and the second in the evening of the daylight.

9. And if they have no option they shall eat only once at the ninth (hour).

10. The monks shall not eat meat either in their monasteries or elsewhere.

11. The monks cannot marry.

12. The monks shall not live with women, and shall not have relations with them.

13. They shall not look on them, neither at the old nor the young ones, neither at the virgins nor at the orphans.

7 Vööbus, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen*, I, 1, p. 400.

14. No one of the monks shall allow himself to receive a deposit from his relatives nor from the strangers, so that he may not draw a scandal or guilt upon the monastery.

15. A head of the monastery who directs (his community) well shall not be removed from his office.

16. A monk who knows a psalm, one only, shall repeat the same psalm in all of his prayers.

17. A monk who eats meat shall be adjudged a fornicator.

18. (If) a monk wants to pray in his cell — this opportunity shall be given to him only on ordinary days, not on the feasts nor on Sundays.

19. A monk who goes to the town for the purpose of instruction, shall live in a church, and shall not neglect fasting and prayer; and if he is poor, he shall labor (in a) work (which is) without blame.

20. A monk shall not enter the convent of nuns at all.

XV. CONDITIONS DURING THE ERA OF THE ABBASIDS

1. New Premises

The period which followed the Umayyad dynasty is far from being as homogeneous as that preceding it. Several factors had emerged in the interim, factors which influenced the political and spiritual direction of the new dynasty. These changes brought about different conditions of existence in the life of the Christians.

The change in the dynasty brought far more politically self-conscious Abbasids to power. With their appearance on the stage of history and the fall of the Umayyad dynasty, there was signalled a process which had already started quietly somewhat earlier, namely, the process of the institutionalization of the Islamic theocracy. Reporters of the history of this period state that the Abbasids really were those who established the caliphate, a task which the predecessors failed to accomplish. Principles and customs which had been followed up to that time could no longer correspond to new tastes. The theocratic principle now adopted caused rearrangements and adjustment in every sector, both of the state and society. Whereas, at the time of Caliph al-Malik, the administrative machinery had been left in the hands of Christians[1] — as it had generally been left in the hands of the local dignitaries after the invasion, at the beginning of the new dynasty, the entire apparatus of administrative service was thoroughly reorganized inclusive of drastic changes[2]. Christians were removed from positions which they had held for generations[3]. Further, whereas at the time of Caliph al-Malik, official correspondence had still been held in Greek or Persian[4], it was henceforward replaced by Arabic.

Significant changes in the sector of religion were not allowed a long hiatus before receiving similar attention[5]. The new potentates began to interpret the Islamic tradition, jurisprudence and the Quran more

[1] MICHAEL SYRUS, *Chronique*, éd. CHABOT IV, p. 487f.

[2] AL-FAKHRI, *Histoire des dynasties musulmanes*, tr. AMAR, p. 243f.

[3] According to Theophanes this had taken place immediately after the change of the dynasty in the year 751; *Chronographia*, ed. CLASSEN I, p. 664.

[4] AL-ĞAHŠIYARI, *Kitab al-wuzara*, ed. MŽIK, p. 9, 11.

[5] FIEY, *Chrétiens syriaques sous les Abbasides*.

stringently. One source goes so far as to identify the year H. 143, i.e. the year 760 A. D., as the turning point[6]. In the wake of this shift, the new rulers approached the question of the subjugated ones with quite different premises. The attitude towards the Christians gradually became harder. The sympathetic attitude towards Christians which had characterized the Umayyad position was replaced by the tendency inexorably to press them into a secondary or tertiary position. The words written by ʿAmr Ibn Bahr al-Džāḥiz reflect the alteration in sentiment. He states there are no more impious people than the Christians are[7]. He accuses them of being arrogant and insolent[8].

The effect of the changed mentality soon became visible. This is most easily seen in the fate of the Arab Christians. As has already been indicated earlier, they had had to be content with certain curtailments and even vexations. But all these difficulties seemed minor by comparison with the ordeals to which they were now subjected. The Caliph Mahdi resorted to violence and suppression in order to compel them to embrace Islam. The new road was to be marked by the blood of Arab Christians[9].

The hardened attitude involved also monasticism. A more rigorous review at the stipulations applying to the monks was carried out. Treaties were inspected and minutely investigated in order to discover on just what basis the monasteries had obtained their right to existence. The prohibition against the building of new monasteries, which had been overlooked in the past, was now brought to the fore. Rights and privileges once granted were submitted to scrutiny and new interpretations. As a result, the relation between monasteries and the Islamic rulers inevitably became a matter of controversy. In that increasingly untenable situation, the monasteries began to invent apocryphal traditions designed for their protection. This in turn provoked counteractions. It would appear that the treaties which bear ʿUmar's name prohibiting not only the building of new monasteries but even the restoration of collapsed and debilitated monasteries[10] were fabricated at this time.

[6] AS-SUYUTI, *History of the Caliphs*, tr. JARRETT, p. 266.

[7] *Risāla fī l-radd ʿala-l-naṣāra*, ed. FINKEL, p. 17.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 18f.

[9] *Chronicon syriacum*, ed. BRUNS-KIRSCH, p. 133. About the year 780 the last still Christian tribe of Banu Tanūkh was compelled to embrace Islam.

[10] *A libro qui inscribitur Thesaurus Regum auctore Seiid Ali Hamadanensi*, tr. ROSENMÜLLER I, p. 15f.

The way in which, in the radically altered climate, the conditions given to the monasteries were to be interpreted can be seen in the apocryphal letter — certainly a product of the Abbasid time — which Ibn al-Wāsitī used and which the Christians had allegedly accepted at the time of the invasion. According to it, the monks were not to be allowed to found new monasteries or monks' cells in towns or in the adjacent territories. Nor were they to be allowed to restore those which had fallen into ruins nor those which the Arabs had pulled down[11].

The more inflexible spirit of the Abbasids not only was not content with the reassessment of the traditions and instructions implementing the new policy, but also occasionally became belligerent against the monasteries and monasticism. This more rigorous disposition evoked the pillaging and plundering of the monasteries and even their destruction. These acts of violence were sometimes initiated by higher authorities but low functionaries even more frequently — quick to read the signs of the times — took action. The author of a compilation known as the Baḥīrā legend conjures up something of the new scenery for us when he speaks of the destruction of churches and monasteries and other vexations of various kinds — these had to do with instrumentalities to compel many children of the church to embrace Islam[12].

The sources more often than has previously been the case report about pillaging and ravaging as well as the destructive fury initiated by local mobs. Any given mob ready for action swiftly noticed that the potentates had nothing against such mayhem; consequently the masses occasionally felt that they could indulge themselves in such violence. The rule of the Abbasids unleashed instincts which found their satisfaction in explosive outrages against the sanctuaries and their keepers. Once the mobs sensed that different winds were blowing under the new dynasty, they could not be restrained from fulfilling their urges. The chronicle under the name of Dionysios Tell-Maḥrē reports that deep cuts were made into monasticism at the beginning of the rule of the Abbasids — as early as the year 751. Their forays resulted in catastrophes which engulfed a number of monasteries in the surroundings of Edessa. The chronicle enumerates ten monasteries which were pillaged and destroyed by such attacks. They were: Kubbē, Resmet, Tispa, Qatara, Hesmi, a

[11] *An Answer to the Dhimmis*, tr. GOTTHEIL, p. 422.

[12] «La légende de Bahira», éd. CARRA DE VAUX, p. 452.

famous monastery, Mār Lazar, Bēt Ma'ade, Mār Habil, Mār Miles and Sūnūn[13].

The suffering which afflicted monasticism was aggravated by hard times[14]. This had the effect of increasing recklessness on the part of the people. Towards the end of the eighth century, heavy famines, natural catastrophies and epidemics occurred, and in a Syrian chronicle, we come across long jeremiads about these time in which people became brutal and shameless even against monks and ascetics. Indeed, among them were persons who did not shrink from attacking monks and ascetics, expelling recluses from their cells and stylites from their columns. Even anchorites who had withdrawn entirely were hunted down and they were made to suffer persecution and oppression[15].

2. Taxation Burdens

Additional difficulties arose because of taxation and the measures adopted sometimes caused extreme hardship.

From the beginning, the size of the tribute was not altogether uniform in every case. We learn, later on, from Ya'qub that the imam was empowered to make such necessary adjustments as might be needed with regard to the tribute in accordance with the abilities of the inhabitants to meet it[1], which meant in the the first place that an increase in the sum demanded from people in a more well-to-do situation always served as a good pretext[2].

Monks who lived in isolation, anchorites, reclusi and stylites were considered exempt from such obligations. According to Ḥassan al-Baṣri, the monks did not have to pay *jizya* because they were poor[3]. Ya'qūb explains the matter in some detail. He places these monks in the category of persons unable to pay, that is, on the same level as those having to live from alms such as the chronically sick, persons who have neither profession nor income[4]. But this principle did not provide protection against occasional harassment and trouble. Eutychius tells about an

[13] *Chronique de Denys de Tell-Mahré*, éd. Chabot, p. 50.
[14] Abramowski, *Dionysius von Tellmahre, passim.*
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 167.
[1] Ya'qoub, *Le livre de l'impôt foncier*, tr. Fagnan, p. 218.
[2] El-Bokhari, *Les traditions islamiques*, tr. Houdas-Marçais II, p. 407.
[3] *Adab ul-kuttab*, ed. Bahdjat al-Atari, p. 216.
[4] *Le livre de l'impôt foncier*, tr. Fegnan, p. 188.

incident from the time of Caliph al-Muktadir. His emissary, sent to Egypt, began to demand tribute from monks as well as from the sick and poor. The monks, in despair, sent their delegation to the caliph in Iraq with complaints. Only then did he give an instruction not to vex the monks with the issue of the tribute and that the matter was to be left as it had been[5].

Nor could the monasteries escape these vexations; they, for their part, attempted to mount a degree of opposition and resistance. Fictitious documents also were fabricated. For example, the inmates of the Monastery of Mār Gabriel claimed that the monastery, as a sign of respect from Caliph 'Umar, had received the privilege that freed the monks, priest and deacons from the obligation of tribute[6]. To what degree such attempts were successful must remain doubtful.

Ya'qūb records one of the arguments used to justify the taxation of the monasteries. The monks who lived in monastic communities enjoyed a certain wealth by way of real estate, the property of the monastery; consequently, it would only be fair that they be obliged to bear the burden of taxation. Indeed, the abbot has a certain obligation to pay taxes also for his subordinates. Only in cases where monks lived in great poverty could the obligation to pay the taxes be waived, and even in such cases, there must be confirmation of their poverty under oath[7] by the abbot.

That the poll tax was imposed also upon monks, a note preserved in a Syriac manuscript[8] comes to our aid. According to this note, the Abbot Mōšē had to go to Baghdad in order to obtain the remission of the poll tax demanded from his monks. Although such actions were not always successful, in the case of poorer monasteries such efforts could not all have remained in vain. However, monasteries such as Dair Qura, south of Baghdad, east of Tigris, described as a blooming monastery with many buildings[9] and gardens[10], had to carry heavy burdens of taxation.

That which appears in a letter written by Catholicos Ḥenanīšō' IV also illumines the situation. In this letter, he speaks of a certain monastery

[5] About him, see page 373f.
[6] «Un colloque du patriarche Jean», éd. Nau, p. 274f.
[7] *Le livre de l'impôt foncier*, p. 188.
[8] This took place in the year 926/7. Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,531, Wright, *Catalogue* II, p. 740.
[9] Jaq, *Iršad* II, p. 24.
[10] This monastery had many little buildings and each was furnished with a garden and fruit trees, Schabuschti, *Das Klosterbuch*, fol. 115b.

which had suffered economically and was in a condition of such distress that it needed help and appeals to people to provide support to remedy the situation. He lays this request upon their hearts in order to try to relieve the burden of taxation which had been imposed upon the monastery[11].

The amount of the taxes and the tributes assigned to the monasteries and monks depended upon the attitude and mood of the emirs and other potentates. That in turn caused a good deal of trouble for the abbots and the monastic communities. Such worries did not make the position of an abbot at all an enviable one. That which the Arab rule in this respect allowed in the fixing of revenues and in the collection of taxes and tribute is amply illustrated in the sources. The oriental despots did not content themselves with lawful means, particularly where money was involved. Just as the caliphs, in their greed, did not weigh the means they used to exact what they wanted, just so did the lesser potentates emulate and even exceed their superiors with their machinations. Whereas these potentates made the collection of regular revenues as rigorous as possible, they also exercised great ingenuity in inventing all sorts of ways to impose new obligations. A Syrian chronicle bluntly states that taxation in general and the collection of the revenues in particular did not differ much from outright robbery[12]. In the same way did these potentates devise other avenues of extortion to acquire precious vessels and articles of value[13].

Other restrictions were inspired by the same bent of mind. We do not have a good example from west Syrian sources, so we shall introduce a paragraph from a law book composed by Catholicos Īšōʿbar Nūn (820-824). This paragraph stipulates that when anyone wishes to become a monk, he is not allowed to take anything from his parents' house, whether they be rich or poor; further, that when his father dies, he has no right to inherit anything from the estate. The most that could be allowed under this stipulation was a gift, under the explicit circumscription that it had to consist of food or clothing which his brothers had decided to give him and that, in accepting it he had to be aware of the fact that it was only a gift and not an inheritance[14]. The income of the monasteries for

[11] *Syrische Rechtsbücher*, ed. SACHAU II, 9.

[12] *Chronique de Denys de Tell-Mahré* II, p. 381. Cf. CAHEN, «Fiscalité, propriété, antagonismes sociaux en Haute-Mésopotamie», p. 136ff.

[13] *Historia compendiosa dynastiarum*, tr. POCKOCK II, p. 145.

[14] *Syrische Rechtsbücher*, ed. SACHAU II, p. 147.

centuries had received vital support for the development of their establishments from gifts by way of inheritance — that source of income was now cut off.

3. Vexations and Sufferings

The caliphs increasingly adopted the manners of oriental despots. Already Caliph Mahdi (775-785) earned notoriety by his oppression and violence. Bar ʿEbrāyā speaks of the destruction of many churches under his rule[1]. This report happens to be substantiated by a monumental inscription preserved in the ruins of a church[2]. The reputation of Hārūn al-Rašīd also is tarnished by certain measures authorized by him, actions which did not accord with his celebrated intelligence. He issued orders whose intent was the humiliation of Christians. Christians in Baghdad could not imitate Muslims in dress or manner of riding[3]. He also exercised his own brand of reason in support of actions of destruction. He overcame the problem of the scarcity of building material for his wide building projects by way of an order to destroy churches and monasteries[4]. Indeed, under the caliphs it became quite the usual practice to demolish buildings to obtain building materials[5] and Christians perforce had to endure the desecration of their religious buildings to provide material for building projects of the rulers. Sometimes such licence was extended to the inhabitants themselves — they were compelled to leave their abodes[6]. Among the despotic figures who occupied the seat of the caliphs, one is particularly remembered in connection with violent action. Al-Mutawakkil earned a particular reputation in this respect[7]. He introduced the laws of harassment which were enforced in the year 849/50 regarding dress[8]. Wooden figures of devils were affixed to

[1] *Chronicon syriacum*, ed. BEDJAN, p. 126.

[2] POGNON, *Inscriptions sémitiques de la Syrie*, p. 149.

[3] They were allowed to use only wooden saddles; Christian women were not allowed to use horses but only donkeys.

[4] MARI, *De patriarchis nest. commentaria*, p. 65.

[5] MUSTAWFI, *Nuzhat al-Qulub*, tr. LE STRANGE, p. 51.

[6] *Chronicon ad ann. 1234 pert.* II, p. 3.

[7] BAR ʿEBRAYA, *Chronicon syriacum*, ed. BRUNS-KIRSCH, p. 162.

[8] The Christians had to wear yellow cloaks and two buttons on their caps which differed in color from those worn by the Arabs. Regardling riding they were allowed to use only wooden stirrups and saddles behind, ṬABARĪ, *Tarʾrīkh ar-rusul* III, I, p. 389; BAR ʿEBRAYA, *Chronicon syriacum*, p. 155.

the houses of the Christians[9]. His decrees prohibited Christians from carrying the cross in processions during festivals and from holding their services in the streets. These were the extreme limits of the legislation of persecution[10]. However, it must be added that, in practice, they were not always put into effect. Al-Mutawakkil also had ordered the destruction of churches and monasteries[11]. Mari has preserved such a report[12] but without more detailed information which thus makes it unclear just how widely this order was implemented.

The increasingly inflexible, more rigorous spirit of such despotic caliphs soon inclined the emirs towards acts of violence. Maslama, the emir of Iran and Khorasan, undertook an action which caused much terror and vexation among Christian communities[13]. It is reported that the emir of Ḥarrān, when taking a walk, noticed new buildings and asked his companions to whom these buildings belonged. Upon hearing that they belonged to the Christians and that they had erected them during his days, he issued the order for the demolition of all of the new religious buildings[14].

During the following times, such actions sporadically occurred from time to time. When in the year 832, the Emir Abdallah was in Egypt, the destruction of churches and monasteries of the Monophysites and Melkites took place. The brother of the caliph gave his endorsement to the destruction, so instigating the mob that control became impossible. In his distress, the patriarch of the Monophysite church had to appeal to the emir that he would intervene to bring the raging and uproar to an end[15]. Even the Chalcedonians could not escape the pogrom. Bar ʿEbrāyā supplements this account with the comment that this destruction also included the convent of the Chalcedonian nuns[16]. With regard to mob instigations, instructive insight is allowed us via an episode which occurred when Caliph Hārūn al-Rašīd visited Edessa. The Arabs

[9] ṬABARĪ, *Tarʾīkh ar-rusul* II, I, p. 389; MAQRIZI, *Khiṭaṭ* II, p. 494.

[10] Caliph Mutawakkil enforced the law that no non-Muslim is entitled to be in the government service.

[11] In the year 853 he gave the order to destroy all sanctuaries, ṬABARĪ, *Tarʾīkh ar-rusul* III, p. 1419.

[12] *De patriarchis nest commentaria*, p. 70.

[13] Maslama ordered to destroy all pictures whether in ecclesiastical buildings, houses or books as well as all images regardless whether in ivory, stone or wood; *Chronicon ad ann. 1234 pert.* I, p. 308.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

[15] *Ibid.*, II, p. 271f.

[16] *Chronicon eccl.*, ed. ABBELOOS-LAMY I, col. 359.

instigated the mob slandering Christians, accusing them of being spies of the Byzantine emperor who annually came secretly to Edessa to meet with them. They urged the caliph to destroy the great church and to forbid the use of the *nākūs*. It was only through the urgent counsel of Yaḥya, his secretary, that that action was not allowed to happen[17]. However, such violence did occur elsewhere and the mob was able to achieve the prohibition of the use of the *nākūs*. That was the case at Malatia[18]. Eliyā of Nisibis provides us with information about mob action in Baghdad. In the year 884/85, an uproar of the inhabitants against the Christians took place because the Christians had ignored the prohibitions and did not obey the regulations on the riding of horses. The mob ravaged the Monastery of Kelīl Išōʿ — all gold and silver vessels were stolen, and even the wood of the building was removed to be sold. The monastery was completely destroyed[19]. Baghdad also saw such savaging on occasions. Nor was the monastery of the catholicos spared this ordeal. One incident occurred under the rule of Catholicos Jōḥannān bar Narsai. It subsequently was repeatedly attacked[20].

In this connection, a piece of legislation should be included. A canon, established by Jōḥannān bar Abgārē at the synod held in the year 900, conjures up a picture of the sad conditions of life then obtaining. The canon speaks of fixed altars to be established only in towns, settlements and places of relative security and outside the areas of persecution under the barbarians[21].

The nearer the time marking the end of the first millenium, the more did excesses of this kind take place. In the year H. which begins with May, 921, the Muslims arranged a pogrom in Damascus. In the course of the violence, the Monastery of Mary and the adjacent magnificent church of Mary were robbed, plundered and destroyed[22]. According to Eutychios[23] and Maqrizi[24], several other monasteries also suffered on this occasion. Such outbursts occasionally also demanded lives. An anonymous chronicle speaks of the slaughter of monks and solitaries on the Mount of Mardē in Ṭūr ʿAbdīn[25].

[17] *Chronicon ad ann. 1234 pert.* II, p. 3.

[18] *Ibid.*, II, p. 35.

[19] *Opus chronologicum*, ed. CHABOT.

[20] AMR, *De patriarchis nest. commentaria*, p. 43.

[21] ʿABDĪŠŌʿ, *Nomocanon*, ed. ASSEMANI, p. 238.

[22] AL-MAKIN, *Historia saracenica*, tr. ERPENIUS, p. 196.

[23] *Annales*, tr. POCKOCK II, p. 515.

[24] *Khiṭaṭ* II, p. 494.

[25] *Chronicon ad ann. 1234 pert.* I, p. 245, 331.

Harassment and vexation increased as time passed. More and more we hear of local potentates allowing the mob to employ violent measures; they themselves also showed an intransigent intolerance, harassing the monks in every way[26]. Dionysios of Tell Maḥrē reports that the emir appointed by Caliph Abu Džafar over Mosul treated the monks with such hostility that the monks did not dare to show themselves on the streets for fear of instigating mob action[27]. In such a poisoned atmosphere, matters run out of control and in places developed to the level of savage epidemics. The same Dionysios of Tell Maḥrē reports that the people not out of need but out of greed had become accustomed to affluence, craving the possessions which belonged to the monasteries, asserting that monasteries needed no earthly goods[28] whatever.

In addition to all of these calamities, other catastrophies aggravated the situation. The chronicle of Petros ibn Rahīb relates that during the reign of al-Mutawakkil (847-861), a very great earthquake traversed Persia, Khorasan, Syria and Yemen. Thousands of buildings collapsed, villages fell into ruins and the monasteries, too, had to give their share[29].

4. Contradictory Forces in the Abbasids' rules

In making a summary of the conditions of life under which Syrian monasticism had to live during the period of Abbasids, it becomes necessary to put diametrically opposite tendencies side by side. This, indeed, is paradoxical but it has its place in the Abbasid period and must be taken into account in the final assessment.

On the one hand, it is inconvertibly clear that the spirit of the Muslims had become harder. The dynasty of the Abbasids has produced many oriental despots who suppressed their subjects and did not spare even their own people[1]. The row of such caliphs is long. Yet, alongside of these despots there are others whose character was quite different and whose actions were humane.

Among the most outstanding caliphs of the latter caliber was Caliph al-Māmūn[2]. The apology written by al-Kindi has preserved a speech of

[26] *Ibid.*, II, p. 272.
[27] *Chronique de Denys de Tell-Mahré*, p. 91.
[28] *Ibid.*, p. 98.
[29] *Chronicon orientale*, ed. CHEIKHO, p. 72.
[1] Among these despots is Abu Džafar who has ruthlessly burdened the people with taxes, *Chronicon syriacum*, ed. BRUNS-KIRSCH, p. 130.
[2] AS-SUYUTI, *History of the Caliphs*, p. 319.

this caliph which shows that liberal views dit exist also among the Abbasids[3]. He gathered just collaborators[4] and demanded of all who shared administrative power just and blameless way of treatment, punishing transgressors by exile and the confiscation of their properties[5]. Caliph al-Māmūn has written an impressive page in the annals of the variegated, sometimes indistinct and obscure ranks of his fellow caliphs[6].

In the same way did the religious policy of the Abbasids display a divided character. A number of caliphs have been connected with rules and regulations to humiliate and oppress the Christians and their institutions. Caliph al-Mutawakkil has earned a particular reputation in this respect[7]. On paper many things were prohibited though it is true that not all of these laws were enforced. But rulers of the opposite type are also not entirely absent. Caliph al-Māmūn took Christians under particular protection, defending them against the harm that came from the Arabs as well as from the Persians. This is what the Christian sources relate[8]. The same al-Māmūn even planned for enactment a very liberal law on religious and ecclesiastical freedom[9].

The same paradox can be seen also in the attitude of the local potentates. The potentate appointed by Abu Džafar over Mosul and its surroundings — a brutal Jew, Mūsa ibn Musʿab — invented unheard of punishments for Christians, imposed the most onerous tribute possible, put tin coins around their necks[10] and had their thumbs cut off[11]. On the other hand, there were potentates who showed a human spirit. Some were even ready to help and made no secret about their friendly attitude towards Christians[12].

In the everyday contacts between Muslims and Christians, the same paradoxical phenomenon appears. On the one hand, there were loud voices demanding the complete isolation of the Christians, particularly in

[3] *An Apology of al-Kindy*, tr. MUIR, p. XIIf.
[4] AL-ǦAHŠIYARI, *Kitab al-Wuzara*, ed. MŽIK, p. 38.
[5] *Chronicon ad ann. 1234 pert.* II, p. 15.
[6] SOURDEL, «La politique religieuse du Calife ʿAbbaside al-Maʾmun», p. 27ff.
[7] See page 367f.
[8] *Chronicon ad ann. 1234 pert.* II, p. 15.
[9] According to this draft every religious community, even if not more than ten members could elect its own spiritual leader whom he promised to acknowledge. The caliph had to bow before the pressure of the hierarchial powers to take the draft back.
[10] According to the Talmud, the Jews marked their slaves in this way, KRAUSS, *Talmudische Archeologie* II, p. 89.
[11] *Chronicon ad ann. 1234 pert.* I, p. 20.
[12] AMR, *De patriarchis nest. commentaria*, p. 91.

religious matters[13]. Hostile and violent actions have been mentioned earlier. On the other hand, the sources also show something different. They describe how Muslims, with pleasure, were visiting the monasteries[14], participating in festivals celebrated in the monastic communities[15]. Such good relations between the Muslims and the Christians particularly come to the fore in the common celebrations of the great festivals of the Christian year, as well as in the festive days of the patron saints of the chief monasteries[16]. Monasteries were, indeed, places where Muslims could not only go to enjoy drinking[17] but also for religious purposes, for instance, to give their solemn vows. Al-Hašimi, in his public letter to al-Kindi, writes that he has visited many monasteries and became acquainted with many monks[18]. In such sources, one receives the impression that intercourse with Christians, in practice, was not always reckless and that Christians did not always have to feel they were a suppressed class. The authoritative author, al-Džahiz, who flourished in the first part of the ninth century, illumines the situation and the general conditions then obtaining. He complains that the Christians do not at all carry the *zunnār*-girdle, the obligatory mark required by the law, or they carried it only beneath their garments; their payment of the poll tax has not taken place in the proper spirit of humble submissiveness nor do they allow themselves to suffer railing and vituperation from the Muslims, but struck back, indulging in the same sort of thing against the Muslims. Yet, after these indignant comments, al-Džāhiz finally asks — and this is most interesting — why should they not act in this way when Muslim judges in cases before the court consider the blood of a Christian to be equal to the blood of an ʿAbbas or Hamza[19]. This picture can be supplemented with an episode which occurred five decades later, recorded in the biographical lexicon of al-Qifti. According to this source, the physician Sinan requests an opinion of the vezir about the practice followed in the Bimaristan, the most famous hospital in Baghdad, where it had always been the custom to treat and nurse on an equal basis Muslim, as well as non-Muslim subjects, i.e. Christians and Jews. The

[13] EL-BOKHARI, *Les traditions islamiques*, tr. HOUDAS-MARÇAIS IV, p. 574.
[14] *Kitāb al-Aghani*, ed. GUIDI, p. 679, cf. p. 461.
[15] YĀQŪT, *Muʿğam al-buldān* II, p. 634, 681, 683, 695 *et passim*.
[16] FISCHER, *Christliche Klöster in muhammedanischen Ländern*, p. 1ff.
[17] *Arabische Erzählungen aus der Zeit der Kaliphen*, tr. SACHAU, p. 7.
[18] AL-HĀŠIMI, *Risāla ilā ʿAbd-al-Masīh al-Kindi*, p. 6.
[19] *Risāla fi redd en-nasāra*, ed. FINKEL, p. 19.

vezir replied that while it was true that the Muslims have privileges, others, too, must be carefully treated[20]. Under such conditions and in such an atmosphere, it even became possible — if what al-Farisi reports about Ḥimṣ is true — for Muslims ans Christians to use one and the same house of God[21].

Finally, while Christians had to endure the ravaging and even the destruction of monasteries and churches, one receives the impression that a situation which imperiled everything with liquidation and destruction was created. Regardless of frequent acts of destruction under Caliph al-Mahdi, the situation actually could not have become unbearable; some years later, in the year 783, Catholicos Timotheos I, in speaking to his time, does not issue any condemnation of the regime of the Muslims[22].

Caliphs destroyed churches and monasteries in order to obtain building material for their building projects, that is known. However, some of them did not act in this way. Caliph al-Muʿtasim did not use force against the monastery when he wanted to build his palace in Samarra. Nor did he order the demolition of the monastery in order to carry out his plans; instead, he bought it[23] for four thousand dinars from the monks[24]. He respected the existence of the monastic community and did not use the avenue of requisition which was open to him.

Even in the instances of demolition, some contradictory phenomena appear. Such dismantling frequently took place under the force of impulse and attempts were sometimes made later on to make good the acts of violence. Ibrahim, the emir of Ḥarrān, ordered every newly erected building to be demolished before sunset. A number of sanctuaries were destroyed. However, by the following morning, he had changed his mind and ordered them to be restored gradually. They were quickly restored[25].

Another incident comes from the region of Edessa. The brother of the emir, acting as deputy, harassed the monks and destroyed buildings, but the Emir Abdallah ordered the destroyed buildings to be restored, that the culprits were to be severely punished[26]. Caliph al-Muktadir (908-32)

[20] *Ta'rikh al-ḥukama*, ed. LIPPERT, p. 194.
[21] *Viae regnorum, Descriptio ditionis moslemicae*, ed. DE GOEJE, p. 52.
[22] *The Apology of Timothy the Patriarch Before the Caliph Mahdi*, ed. MINGANA, p. 61f.
[23] MASʿUDI, *Kitab ut tanbih wal ishraf*, p. 357.
[24] YAʿQUBI, *Les pays*, tr. WIET, p. 6.
[25] *Chronicon ad ann. 1234 pert.* II, p. 10.; BAR ʿEBRĀYĀ, *Chronicon eccl.*, col. 139.
[26] *Ibid.*, p. 272.

ordered the buildings which were destroyed during the pogrom arranged by Muslims to be restored[27]. And when Caliph Hārūn al-Rašīd, in justification of demolitions ordered by him, commanded Yaʿqūbi to formulate a policy to the effect that the new buildings of the Christians had to be demolished[28], it is not probable that he had the demolition of all the newly erected buildings in mind. Christians tried to replace their losses and, according to a report given by Mari, Catholicos Timotheos had been able to haggle some sort of permission for the restoration of the monasteries[29] from the same caliph. This report cannot be confirmed by other sources.

The entire picture of the era is permeated by the same paradoxical phenomena. Despite all the restrictions on the erection of new ecclesiastical buildings, the fact is that monasteries appeared in many places, as they appeared in almost all quarters of Baghdad.

Thus, the era of the Abbasids leaves us with the impression of a strange situation, full of contradictions and paradoxes. Intolerance alternates with tolerance[30], and suppression and violence with understanding. This bi-polar tension is to be seen across the generations of this era. Even in times when the supremacy of Islam loudly was proclaimed and forcefully carried out, the situation did not become ultimately threatening for the Christians.

[27] *Le livre de l'impôt foncier*, p. 228.
[28] See page 369.
[29] *De patriarchis nest. commentaria* I, p. 65f.
[30] NOTH, «Möglichkeiten und Grenzen islamischer Toleranz», p. 190ff.

XVI. CONDITIONS DURING THE ERA OF THE ABBASIDS
(*Continuation*)

1. The Vitality of Monasticism

Up to now, we have traced only the hardships and difficulties which the Abbasid period brought to monasticism. By comparison with the rule of the Umayyads, this period was more severe. Yet all the curtailments and difficulties had not yet become so perilous as to cause serious decline. Despite everything, the Abbasid period did not bring about massive changes. Without a doubt, this epoch did not allow Syrian monasticism the luxury of attaining the former level and spirit of its floration. But it did show enough tenacity and stamina to survive the harder times and to carry on its existence. We can therefore not speak of a decline of Syrian monasticism before the middle of the tenth century. Before that time, it was still able to demonstrate its strength; the Abbasid period could not take the spirit of resistance from it.

Unmistakable evidence of the vitality of Syrian monasticism must be seen not only in the fact that it was able to continue its existence with the existing network of monasteries, but also was able to expand by creating and expanding new monasteries. Given the more rigorous spirit, the erection of new monasteries was forbidden and this restriction was reinforced time and again by threats and warnings. This official prohibition continued until Adud-ed-daulah, through his Christian vezir, Nasr ben Hārūn, finally annulled it in the year H. 368, i.e. 979 A.D.[1]. In the meantime, however, Syrian monasticism did not simply wait for the annulment but exercised a considerable tenacity in finding ways to found new monasteries. The more outstanding of the monasteries which have secured their role in the history of monasticism deserve to be introduced as illustrations of the spirit that lived in these communities.

In the first place, a famous monastery established in the second part of the eighth century, must be introduced. Athanasios Sandalayā, a monk from the Monastery of Qarṭamīn was a celebrated metropolitan of

[1] MISKAWAIHI, *The Concluding Portion of the Experiences of the Nations*, tr. MARGOLIOUTH II, p. 447.

Maipherqaṭ who later was elevated to the patriarchal throne. His name is connected with the foundation of this monastery. The exact date of its founding is not known but it must be placed at the beginning of the Abbasid period. The institution in question is the Monastery of Athūnōs[2]. According to Michael Syrus the monastery was located above the region of Tell Bešmē[3].

It is useful to focus one's gaze upon the new capital. According to the sources, Caliph Abu Džafar founded Baghdad in the year 762 at a place where there was a village of the same name and where, according to Ya'qūbi, a monastery also was located[4]. That monasteries could secure a firm footing in the new capital speaks volumes. Here, under Caliph al-Mahdi (775-85), the Monastery of Deir ar-Rūm was built[5]. It was a magnificent establishment. Its complex embraced an imposing church near the residence of the catholicos. It is all the more remarkable that this could take place under the eyes of a caliph whose reputation has been tarnished by his reprisals against Christians and the destruction of monasteries.

Later on, the Monastery of Samālū was founded in Baghdad[6]. The West Syrians, too, founded their monastery here[7]. Thus, under the eyes of the caliphs in their resident city, quite a number of monasteries could be founded according to the information given by Yāqūt and Šabušti[8].

The founding of yet another monastery associated with a celebrated name is now to be introduced. Towards the end of the century, the founding of the Monastery by Jōḥannān of Dalyathā took place. After a longer period in the anchoretic life in the mountains of Qardū, he founded this monastery[9]. It soon developed into an outstanding monastery and, in a later source on the founders of monasteries, it appears among the most important monasteries established during the Islamic era[10].

Patriarch Dionysios of Tell Maḥrē (817-45), who had previously been a monk in Qennešrē, experienced a good deal of difficulty in order to

2 *Chronique de Denys de Tell-Mahré*, p. 58.
3 *Chronique* IV, p. 483.
4 YA'QŪBI, *Les pays*, tr. WIET, p. 6.
5 YĀQŪT, *Mu'ğam al-buldān* II, p. 670.
6 See page 365, 374.
7 *Ibid.*, II, p. 662.
8 ŠABUŠTI, *Das Klosterbuch.*
9 See page 334f.
10 *Collectio documentorum hactenus inedita*, ed. RAHMANI, p. 34.

extract permission for the building of the monastery from the Emir 'Othman[11]. The monastery had been destroyed by fire before he was elevated to the patriarchal see. It is obvious that he obtained the permission and built the monastery, since it is reported that he found his last resting place there. The notion that he might have been buried in the ruins of the destroyed monastery is not credible.

Under the rule of the same patriarch, another famous monastery was built, namely, the Monastery of Ja'qōb of Kaišūm. We are very fortunate that further confirmation comes from epigraphic sources. A monumental inscription in the ruins of the monastery comes to our aid. While the exact year of the erection of the monastery is not mentioned, it is stated that Dionysios was the patriarch and Mar Theodoros was the bishop at the time the monastery was erected[12].

North of Tell 'Adē, ruins are located which once belonged to a great monastery. The memory of its founding has been resuscitated via a monumental inscription cut into a huge stone which tells us about its construction. Timotheos, or if an alternate way of reading is adopted, Matteos[13], had built this monastery in the year 1170 according to the era of the Seleucides, i.e. 858/A.D.[14]. Thus this grand monastery was erected near the end of the rule of Caliph al-Mutawakkil.

Still more light comes from epigraphic sources. A very impressive monastic building, which contains a magnificent mosaic pavement, has come to light through archaeological excavations in the area of Jordan. A monumental inscription in Syriac, inscribed in the pavement, tells us that this monastery was erected in the ninth century[15].

The testimony given by monasteries which have earned their reputation and fame in the history of monasticism is illuminating. It also speaks on behalf of other less important establishments. New monasteries must have been added, particularly in the Ṭūr 'Abdīn area, to the great monastic centers there during the era of Abbasids. Information, provided by the evidence to which we have just referred, points to a broader, ampler picture in the history of the expansion of the monastic establishments, a picture which is reflected through the canons and resolutions

11 BAR 'EBRĀYĀ, *Chronicon eccl.* I, col. 350.
12 JALABERT-MOUTERDE, *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie* I, p. 61.
13 LITTMANN, *Syriac Inscriptions*, p. 19.
14 POGNON, *Inscriptions sémitiques de la Syrie*, p. 54.
15 STEPHEN-BARAMKI, «A Nestorian Hermitage Between Jericho and the Jordan», p. 83.

issued by Theodosios, patriarch of Antioch, who ruled from 887 til 896. There we find rulings on the plates for altars — on which priests are entitled to consecrate the eucharist — in monasteries which had been recently built and which could not be consecrated[16]. We also learn that monasteries were erected around Melitene. This source tells us that these monasteries were built to replace destroyed monasteries[17].

Given such facts, it follows that the tendency to see the fate of the Syrian monasteries only from the angle of the various restrictions and hardships caused by caliphs, local Muslim potentates or the mob is one-sided; the Syrian monasticism was still a force which did not allow its life to be adumbrated but sought new opportunities to regain its losses and, whenever possible, to expand its network, though not with the same enthusiasm and vigor as had earlier been the case.

2. The Founding of the Monastery of Mār Ḥanānyā

Of the monasteries erected in the ninth century, the founding of the Monastery of Mār Ḥanānyā deserves a special treatment. Owing to its great historical importance, it deserves more ample treatment. The Monastery of Mār Ḥanānyā[1], not far from Mardē, the seat of the bishop, is better known under the name of Deir Zaʿfarān[2]. This monastery was not only one of the most important among the West Syrians in the area of the maphrianate but it also has played a very important role in the history of the entire West Syrian Church.

The man under whose name the monastery became known and whose name has been immortalized through its founding, was Mār Ḥanānyā, bishop of Mardē and Kephartūtā[3]. The data of his life, insofar as they are extant through the short biography[4], the report by Jōḥannān of

[16] *Ancienne littérature canonique syriaque*, tr. II, p. 101.
[17] Bar ʿEbrāyā, *Chronicon eccl.* I, col. 417.
[1] Preusser, *Nordmesopotamische Denkmäler* II, p. 49; Bell, *Amidawerk*, p. 225ff.
[2] زعفران, «Safron» in Ms. Berl. Sachau 227, fol. 182b. The monastery appears under the name ܕܝܪܐ ܕܟܘܪܟܡܐ Dairā de-Kūrkāmā which is the Syriac term for «safron».
[3] Ms. Damascus Patr. 8/11, fol. 217b-218b; cf. Ms. Vatican Syr. 96, fol. 40b.
[4] Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 38, fol. 180a-181a; Ms. Mardin Orth. 272, fol. 289a-290a; Ms. Zaʿfarān 3/9, nr. 11 in the collection; Ms. Qarṭamīn, bound in red cloth, has no signature; its measurements are: 24,5 × 17cm.; the vita appears as nr. 12 in the corpus.

Mardē, in several recensions of it[5] and in the historiographic tradition[6] only deal with major events in his life and activities. He is reported to have received his education and his theological preparation at the Monastery at Qalliniqos. The same monastery even later remained his home.

According to the annalistic tradition, Patriarch Qyriaqos, already at the beginning of his pontificate, brought Ḥanānyā out of the monastery and elevated him to the episcopal see of Mardē and Kephartūtā[7]. The chronicle of Michael Syrus tells us a bit more: that it was in the year 793[8] when Ḥanānyā was elevated to the episcopacy by Patriarch Qyriaqos[9].

The story of the founding of his monastery is not uniformly recorded. There are texts[10] which claim that the monastery had a prehistory[11]. But the report which Bar ʿEbrāyā has included into his work has a different sound to it. According to it, Mār Ḥanānyā was the founder of the monastery. Bar ʿEbrāyā tells us how he selected, purchased and built the monastery in an ancient and abandoned fortress for the undertaking. Bar ʿEbrāyā also reports that the guarantor, for his account, is Īšōʿdenaḥ, a Nestorian author, who had preserved this information about the founding of the Monastery of Mār Ḥanānyā[12]. Michael Syrus guides us still farther, due to the fact that he wrote an excerpt about the founding of the monastery. It confirms the report that Ḥanānyā bought[13] the fortress: «He found a fortress in the surrounding of Mardē, built with squared stones in the time of the Romans; he bought it and created (there) the monastery»[14]. In order to accomplish his aims, he had to

[5] One recension appears as an appendix to the Vita of Benjamin, «La vie de Benjamin», ed. Scheil, p. 91f.; Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 252, fol. 18b-19b.
[6] Bar ʿEbrāyā, *Chronicon eccl.* I, col. 333, 335.
[7] *Ibid.*, I, col. 333.
[8] *Chronique* IV, p. 488f.
[9] Ms. Damascus Patr. 8/11, fol. 217b.
[10] According to Jōḥannān of Mardē the monastery existed earlier but it was not known any longer when it had been founded, Ms. Damascus Patr. 8/11, fol. 217b; cf. *Bibliotheca orientalis*, ed. Assemani II, p. 223.
[11] According to another tradition the monastery existed earlier and had been founded on the name of Šelēmōn, «La vie de Benjamin», p. 91; Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 252, fol. 18b; Ms. Mardin Orth. 272, fol. 289b.
[12] *Chronicon eccl.* I, col. 333.
[13] That Ḥanānyā built his monastery on the side of a ruined castle which he had bought from the Arabs, is recorded also in the Armenian version of his chronicle, *Chronique*, tr. Langlois, p. 266.
[14] ܘܐܫܟܚ ܒܩܘܪܒܬܐ ܕܡܪܕܐ ܚܣܢܐ ܕܒܢܐ ܗܘܐ ܒܟܐܦܐ ܦܣܝܠܬܐ ܡܢ ܙܒܢܐ ܕܪܗܘܡܝܐ. ܘܙܒܢܗ ܘܥܒܕܗ ܕܝܪܐ.

expend considerable cash upon the local authorities. Since he was well-to-do, he was able to do so[15]. He, too, introduces his source, and with it all desirable data: «In the chronicle, composed by a Nestorian with the name of Denaḥīšō', in his church history, in the tenth book, chapter XVII, he says the following about Ḥanānyā, bishop of the Severians»[16]. Thus did Michael Syrus render us a real service by salvaging as he did this information from a lost church historical work[17]. This is all the more to be welcome because we have to do with a source which leads us back to the middle of the ninth century.

As for the exact time of the founding, nothing certain can be established. The supposition that the year was 811[18] has no reliable backing.

The thought of restoring the ruins of an ancient and abandoned fortress in order to found a monastery was important in times to come. The newly founded monastery was fortunate that it had been set on the track to eminence and success. Its existence was guaranteed in every respect and so was its future.

The founding of the monastery[19] was carefully planned, properly built up and furnished with necessary buildings. No less than three churches were erected in the monastery[20] — indication of a forceful start. In the creation of its spiritual treasure, Mār Ḥanānyā shows himself to have been diligent. It is reported that he established a library in the monastery[21].

The existence of the new monastic center was secured by a foundation of material things[22]. The founder saw to it that the monastery was given

[15] *Ibid.*

[16] [illegible], *Chronique* IV, p. 489.

[17] Of this church history very little has been left in Eliyā bar Šinaya, and these few excerpts break off with the year 713/14.

[18] ARMALET, *Couvents de Mardin*, p. 763.

[19] EPHRAEM BARṢAUMA, *Ta'rīh Dair az-Za'farān*.

[20] [illegible], «and there were in it 3 churches: Mārt Šmūnī in the direction of Mardin, Mār Gīwargīs above the village, in the western direction, and Mār Iwannīs towards the East», «La vie de Benjamin», p. 92.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 91.

[22] The monastery was furnished with vineyards, gardens and plantations of trees, *ibid.*, p. 91.

title to adequate land. For this purpose, he restored a village and, after the revival of life there, turned it over to the monastery[23]; that was done in order to furnish the new monastery in Ṭūr 'Abdīn with revenue producing support.

Tradition also reports that the monastery grew in reputation and soon reached its fame. In accord with that growth, also the number of the inmates increased. It is reported that the monastic community reached eighty members[25] within the lifetime of the founder.

Attention to a different area was not overlooked by Ḥanānyā. He reckoned with the need of securing the attention of the religious masses for the new monastery. He is reported to have brought the relics of the legendary 'Augēn[26] and his companions into the monastery. This step, too, speaks of his well-planned overall design in the undertaking. In this way, the newly founded monastery soon became one of the most important centers of the saints in the monastic network.

The year of Mār Ḥanānyā's death has fallen into oblivion. His commemoration day was celebrated on the twentieth[27] or the twenty-first[28] of November.

3. THE ABBASIDS' RULE IN RETROSPECT

After this review of the historical facts, we are prepared for an assessment of this era in the history of Syrian monasticism. It is obvious that monasticism, in passing through this era, experienced hardships but also utilized whatever favorable conditions which the Islamic empire made possible. In this evaluation, we should not for a moment forget the fact that the wars and devastations, which in previous times had brought endless catastrophes and calamities, did not materially affect conditions

[23] [illegible], «Mār Ḥanānyā built the village of Qal'ā de-Attē at his monastery and restored it and gave it as a gift to the monastery and put it under the jurisdiction of this monastery», p. 92.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 92. About the founding of the monastery of Mār Ḥanānyā, see also VÖÖBUS, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen* I, 1,B, p. 381ff.

[26] BHO, p. 30.

[27] Ms. Aleppo Orth. A, fol. 178b; it looks that also Ms. Deir Za'farān 1/6, fol. 120a joins the same tradition; the date is worn out but looks to be the 20th of Tešrī'aḥrai.

[28] Ms. Šarfeh Syr. 5/3, fol. 218b.

in this era. The sources leave us with the impression that Syrian monasticism, for the most part, in this era even was able to retain a spirit which the vexations of the Abbasid dynasty could not very seriously affect. There are signs which speak of the perseverance and tenacity of this spirit. It is true that the number of outstanding personalities, the ascetic celebrities has shrunk and this indicates a setback, but it would appear that the same enthusiastic, even fanatical, forms of monastic life could be continued in the monasteries and in the cells of the anchorites.

This shows that the fountainhead of that enthusiasm had not dried up, although it could not flow with the same previous freshness. Nevertheless, the life impulses were still able to flow at a time when that was not any longer in other places. That is the perspective which must be brought out before we conclude this chapter. This issue needs to be put into proper historical perspective in order to evaluate the place and role of Syrian monasticism more properly as over against the wider scene.

First of all, we must direct our gaze towards Egypt. Observations made by Dionysios of Tell-Maḥrē of Egyptian monasticism, in the year 825 or 826, help us to form a better estimate of Syrian monasticism at that time. According to his testimony, Egyptian monasticism, during that period, was in a full decline. Intellectually and spiritually, it had lost its spirit. Study among the monks had been forgotten. Their activities consisted only of handwork; even the Psalter they rarely recited[1]. By comparison with this scenario, Syrian monasticism exhibits a far more energetic spirit and greater stamina. Perhaps it is only some years earlier that we see al-Hāšimī admiring the severity of the asceticism[2] of the Syrian monks and the level of their intellectual education[3]. Thus, throughout the era of the Abbasids, the gravitation point of the monastic movement remained in Syṛian monasticism numerically as well as spiritually and intellectually.

It is time to direct a look towards Byzantium. An estimate can be made with greater assurance when another side-glimpse is taken, this time at Byzantine monasticism. Regardless of the fact that it had the privilege of living and developing under Christian rulers, it suffered deterioration. In this connection, a very useful document comes to our aid. Patriarch Johannes IV of Antioch, one of the contemporaries of Alexios I Komnenos (1081-1118), composed an historically interesting document[4]

[1] MICHAEL SYRUS, *Chronique* IV, p. 525f.
[2] *Risālat 'Abdallāh ibn Ismā'ēl al-Hāšimi*, p. 10.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Oratio de disciplina monastica*, ed. MIGNE, PG CXXXII, col. 1117f.

about the decline of the Byzantine monasticism during these centuries. That which is presented in this source brings out the problems which beset Byzantine monasticism and undermined it. The secularization of the monasteries as an instrument to undermine them — an ingenious invention of the rulers — was very dangerous. As early as Constantinos V Kopronymos (741-775), monasteries were given to rich people and to meritorious persons as rewards[5]. Thus was initiated a process of profanation which rapidly reached ghastly dimensions, devastating the entire monastic movement[6]. Monks, together with their abbots, virtually became servants of lay people[7]. As a result, the entire monastic movement went downhill, and that to such a degree that as the author bluntly affirms, it had become impossible even to introduce reforms because of resistance on the part of the monks who had become accustomed to a life of laxity[8].

In the light of the wider panorama in history, including the Byzantine monasticism, it is not difficult to make the final estimate: as long as the Arab empire continued in strength, Syrian monasticism, in general, experienced relatively good times.

[5] *Ibid.*, col. 1128f.
[6] At the time of Patriarch Johannes, the large and small, rich and poor monasteries for monks and nuns, except only a small number, were in the hands of the lay people, *ibid.*, col. 1129ff. This source describes how impossible had become the situation in the monasteries: the laymen killed there their animals, ate and drank and did all whatever thinkable.
[7] *Ibid.*, col. 1141ff.
[8] *Acta et diplomata graeca medii aevi sacra et profana*, ed. MIKLOSICH-MÜLLER VI, p. 64f.

XVII. THE VORTEX OF CATASTROPHES AND THE DECLINE

1. Destructive Forces

The second part of the tenth century saw the swift decline of Syrian monasticism. This period stands under the sign of rapid deterioration. The fact that Syrian monasticism later on had a better time of it for a while, when it enjoyed a brief period of revived life in the aftermath, points to the fact that the reasons for the decline cannot be sought in monasticism itself. Outside conditions were responsible; they were of such a far-reaching impact that neither Syrian Christianity nor monasticism could survive in the vortex catastrophy.

In the place, one must take the disintegration of the caliphate into account. Already towards the end of the ninth century, clear symptoms that the caliphate had passed its time began to appear. The era of the Caliph al-Motamed Ollah was so saturated with disorders, raids and wars, that the first cracks in the walls of the empire of the caliphs began to haunt those who could read the signs of times[1].

The disintegration of the structure of the caliphate was not long in coming. After the death of Caliph al-Radi, perhaps in part even during his lifetime, a new phase began for the caliphs. Al-Fakhri states that al-Radi in truth was the last whose authority over the army and the finance, and even otherwise was strong enough to maintain the traditions of his predecessors; his successors were hardly able to retain much more than their titles[2].

The time came when the usurpers began to divide up the legacy of the caliphs. Around the middle of the tenth century, the territory was divided among emirs who seldom or never deigned to deal with the caliphs.

New potentates were emerging behind the Oxus River, potentates keenly following the development, sensing that their time had arrived. They were the Turks. The influence on these non-Arab elements became a serious danger, threatening to overpower the Islamic state[3]. Attempts

[1] Eutychius, *Annales*, ed. Cheikho - de Vaux - Zayyat, p. 241.

[2] *Histoire des dynasties musulmanes*, tr. Amar, p. 484f.

[3] These troubles had a prehistory. It was a fatal mistake that Caliph al-Muʿtaṣim (833-42) in order to relieve himself from the influence of the Arab troops of Khorasan, he

were made to evade the danger by parceling out the land that regrettably only dismembered the empire. Miskawaihi tells us how the Turks seized lands in the year H. 348, which began in 959 A. D., took the finance into their hands and subordinated authoritative persons under their yoke[4]. As time passed, they continued to barbarize the caliphate, dismembering its strength so that the caliphs finally had nothing left but religious functions. Real power gradually slipped into the Turks. At the turn of the millenium, the chroniclers could begin a new chapter in their annals, the era of the Turks.

This rapid decline is illustrated by an instructive phenomenon, namely that in the tenth century took a rapid decline in the use of the Syriac at a pace that by the eleventh century Arabic had taken over in speech and writing.

2. Devastation

The collapse of the central power inevitably invited incursions, raids, savage attack and wars. While even during the earlier better time, the caliphs were not always able fully to control the dangers — the raids, marauding and devastation by tribes with an appetite for robbery and devastation which increasingly brought sufferings and losses to the monasteries[5] — now the last obstacles to curb such devastations and havocs were removed. Now the gangs of the Turks and Dailamites continually were on the prowl. The whole of Mesopotamia was pillaged by their forays and predatory raids. The Kurds, in particular, became daring and bold. Caliph al-Māmūn had already had trouble with them[6], but at that time the caliphate still had the authority and means at its disposal to take appropriate action; now there was no power which

founded a bodyguard of 4,000 Turks and Turcomans. Thereby he called out evil spirits which began to trouble him almost immediately, making it impossible for him to stay in Baghdad. Thus the seat of the government had to be removed to Samarra on the Tigris.

[4] *The Concluding Portion of the Experiences of the Nations*, tr. Margoliouth I, p. 189.

[5] Qudāmah ibn Jaʿfar, a tenth century Arab geographer, reports that every year 3 military expeditions were undertaken against the Byzantines. Michael Syrus relates of the year 841 that the tribe of Rabiʿayē plundered and pillaged the regions of Nisibis, Šiggār, Ṭūr ʿAbdīn and Qardū, *Chronique*, ed. Chabot IV, p. 540. These were the areas with the most important monastic centers.

[6] *Chronicon ad ann. 1234 pert.*, ed. Chabot II, p. 25.

could set some limits upon their affrontery and audacity. In that hopeless situation, everyone looked helplessly on while the Turks were destroying towns and settlments en masse. One of the tragic examples was Kufa — its inhabitants were killed or taken as prisoners[7]. In the year 967, Damascus was beleaguered and this created such a perilous situation that no one dared to undertake a pilgrimage[8]. Many locations were completely pillaged and emptied of people, people who were killed or dragged off as prisoners[9]. When one reads the chronicle of Miskawaihi which is filled with accounts of countless inroads, raids, forays, pillages, predatory incursions and military expeditions, one receives the impression that wide areas of Syria, Mesopotamia and Persia were depopulated.

The internal disintegration of the caliphate invited additional trouble from the outside. Byzantium had been awaiting such a time. It authorized several military expeditions intended to vanquish the remnants of Arab power. A beginning was made by Nicephoros who, in the year 958, defeated the Arabs on the boundaries of Syria and succeeded in capturing a number of towns, among others, Mopsvestia, Hierapolis, Emesa, Aleppo, Antioch; thereafter, the whole of Northern Mesopotamia was pillaged by incursions[10]. The Christian chronicles speak of murdered inhabitants, people who were taken as prisoners and of burned down settlements[11]. Ghastly gaps were cut into the population[12]. Entire regions were deprived of human beings[13]. For instance, Melitene was left in such a miserable condition that it had to be settled anew with people brought there from elsewhere[14].

Johannes Zimiskes developed military expeditions, the grave consequences of which, for the population and the land, extended even farther. The sources speak of two military expeditions: one after the death of Phokas into the north of Mesopotamia, reaching as far as Baghdad, and the other against the Fatimides in Southern Syria, Phoenicia and Palestine. Of both, he himself speaks in a letter sent to king Ašot III of Armenia[15]. Christian chronicles describe the ghastly bloodbaths and

[7] AL-MAKIN, *Historia saracenica*, tr. ERPENIUS, p. 190.
[8] AS-SUYUTI, *History of the Caliphs*, tr. JARRETT, p. 421.
[9] «Vie du moine Rabban Youssef», p. 84.
[10] PO XVIII, p. 825f.
[11] *Chronicon syriacum*, ed. BRUNS-KIRSCH, p. 192.
[12] MISKAWAIHI, *The Concluding Portion of the Experiences of the Nations* II, p. 225f.
[13] *Histoire de Yahja ibn Sa'ib*, ed. KRATCHKOVSKY-VASILJEV, p. 730, 733.
[14] BAR 'EBRĀYĀ, *Chronicon eccl.*, ed. ABBELOOS-LAMY I, col. 411.
[15] *Chronique de Matthieu d'Édesse*, tr. DULAURIER, p. 15ff.

destructions exacted by these expeditions[16]. The catastrophe of Nisibis may serve as an illustration. When the town fell, its surroundings devastated, he let the inhabitants be killed and brought the children into captivity[17]. The chronicle of Georgios Hamartolos tells about the undertakings by Zimiskes that the land up to Edessa and the Euphrates was ploughed up under the hoofs of the horses across which the sword of the Byzantines mowed like a scythe ...[18]. This is why Matthew of Edessa, who lived there as a monk, describes the last decades of the century as a time full of ruin and slavery. He claims that Syria and Mesopotamia had experienced such an effusion of blood that these lands were soaked by the blood of the Christians[19].

3. ANNIHILATION

In the course of all of these trials, ordeals, tribulations and catastrophes, the attitude of Islam hardened towards the Christians. Phenomena now appeared which, on their part, contributed to the process moving towards the liquidation of Syrian Christianity. Miskawaihi describes for the year 971[1] the coercive tactics and reprisal measures which began to be used and which gradually developed into suppression[2] and persecution[3]. The conversions to Islam which had started earlier[4] proceeded apace. At the turn of the millenium, Mari reports, this had become a tidal wave. An examination of the lists of episcopal ordinations at the end of the chronicle of Michael Syrus[5] also reflects the rapid decline. All these changes which were inaugurated before the end of the century mirror deep cuts in the body of the Monophysite community.

Eliyā bar Šīnāyā, at the beginning of the new millenium, in a letter makes it clear just how deep the gaps in Christianity had been cut, how sharply the present differed from the time four decades earlier. According to him, the picture had changed so drastically that one could not compare

[16] *Chronicon ad ann. 1234 pert.* II, p. 41.
[17] *Chronicon syriacum*, p. 202; MISKAWAIHI, *The Concluding Portion of the Experiences of the Nations* II, p. 326.
[18] GEORGIOS MONACHUS, *Chronicon*, ed. MURALT, p. 865.
[19] *Chronique*, p. 52.
[1] MISKAWAIHI, *The Concluding Portion of the Experiences of the Nations* II, p. 330f.
[2] ABU SHUJA RUDHRAWARI, *Continuation of the Experiences*, tr. MARGOLIOUTH, p. 443.
[3] AMR, *De patriarchis nest. commentaria*, p. 49ff.
[4] BAR 'EBRĀYĀ, *Chronicon eccl.* I, col. 388.
[5] *Chronique* III, p. 465ff.

it in terms of the numbers of the Christians and the ecclesiastical institutions — so terribly had Christianity shrunk[6]. He feels that the Monophysites had not declined as much as the Nestorians, however, according to al-Biruni, the Nestorians constituted the greater part of Christendom[7] in the region. Muslim authors, too, have made similar observations. While al-Farisi could observe, with regard to Persia, that the Christians[8] ranked next to the community of Zoroastrism, Muqaddasi states that he had found only a few Christians there[9].

The rapid decline is illustrated by another item — in the tenth century Syriac swiftly fell into disuse, indeed, at such a pace so that by the eleventh century, Arabic had taken over the field in speech and writing.

In the disasters which political anarchy brought upon itself, Syrian monasticism rapidly melted down. The necessity of Christians to seek refuge during the predatory raids, incursions and pillages in the monasteries, made these institutions vulnerable to attack. Countless monasteries were destroyed and uncounted monks killed or dispersed in the course of these violent actions.

The fate of the most celebrated monasteries illustrate the tragedy. The famous monastery of Šemʿōn, near Antioch, was conquered by the Arabs in the year 985. After a siege of three days, the greater part of the monks was killed[10]. At about the same time, the famous monastery of Mār Maron was destroyed; the Maronites were compelled to liquidate their spiritual center in Mesopotamia and move the remnants to Lebanon. Masʿūdī relates that the monastery as well as the surrounding cells and huts of the anchorites were utterly demolished through repetitive despoliative raids of the Arabs[11]. Just as famous monasteries disappeared, so did countless others of lesser fame and reputation.

Deep incisions and heavy wounds now marked the network of the monasteries and those that remained were reduced at a rapid rate. The Kurds especially became very dangerous for monasteries and monks, continually picking up those who had somehow managed to survive[12]. They systematically[13] carried out deeds of destruction[14]. The net result

[6] «*Ein Brief des Elias bar Šinaja*», tr. VANDENHOFF, p. 65f.
[7] AL-BIRUNI, *Chronology of Ancient Nations*, tr. SACHAU, p. 27.
[8] AL-FARISI, *Descriptio ditionis moslemicae*, ed. DE GOEJE, p. 139.
[9] *Descriptio imperii moslemici*, ed. DE GOEJE, p. 414.
[10] *Historia saracenica*, p. 248.
[11] MASʿŪDĪ, *Kitāb at-tanbīh*, ed. DE GOEJE, p. 153f.
[12] *Chronicon Syriacum*, p. 559.
[13] *Chronicon ad ann. 1234 pert.* II, p. 46.
[14] «Vie du moine Rabban Youssef», p. 83, 327.

of all these calamities was utterly dismal. Eliyā bar Šīnāyā gives an account of the situation in monasticism during his time. According to him, in less than forty years the chaotic conditions had brutally damaged monasticism: the network of the monasteries had dried together and the number of monks along with them[15]. The state of Monophysite monasticism is similar as reflected in the liquidation of bishoprics[16] which had been known since older times as important centers of monasticism, centers such as Tellā Mauzelat, Qennešrīn, Dārā, Rēšʿainā.

Just how miserable the status of the monasteries had become is shown in a report by Jōḥannān of Mardē who, more than a century after the turn of the millenium, gives us an account of the rest of the catastrophes which descended upon most important centers of monasteries. He speaks of Ṭūr ʿAbdīn, the paradise of monasticism, unparalleled for its heavy concentration of monastic establishments — nearly one hundred monasteries were located there in better times[17]. At the time Jōḥannān of Mardē wrote, not a single monk was left in Ṭūr ʿAbdīn[18] and even the memory of what a monk looked like had vanished from the recollection of the people.

[15] «Brief des Elias bar Šinaja», p. 64f.
[16] MICHAEL SYRUS, *Chronique* III, p. 473ff.
[17] NIEBUHR found in this region ruins of 70 monasteries, *Reisebeschreibung nach Arabien und anderen umliegenden Ländern* II, p. 388.
[18] *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition* II, ed. VÖÖBUS, p. 201ff.

XVIII. RESTORATION OF MONASTICISM IN ṬŪR ʿABDĪN

1. Jōḥannān of Mardē

The catastrophes which had swept over the entire Syrian Orient had left devastation and ruin behind. A precious historical source gives a very grim picture of all that had taken place: «These places were ravaged, those famous towns, Rešʿainā, Dārā, Kephartūtā, Mardin, and all the monasteries of these places together with these towns — were ravaged and desolated of monks entirely and tracelessly[1]»[2]. The man who did not succumb to that which seemed to be an inevitability was Jōḥannān of Mardē[3]. Thus destined, he was to see life sprout again in the region of Ṭūr ʿAbdīn. That which took place here is connected with the activities of this very extraordinary personality.

With regard to the sources about Jōḥannān of Mardē, there is, indeed, no need for complaint. Valuable data come from different quarters and even from Jōḥannān himself. This is very welcome since this very important event needs as full an elucidation as possible.

With regard to the person of Jōḥannān of Mardē, Michael Syrus, who was a contemporary of Jōḥannān, has included some data in his annalistic work[4]. Michael reports that Jōḥannān was consecrated by Patriarch Athanasios Abū al-Farağ in the year 1436 A. Gr., i.e. in the year 1124/5 A. D.[5]. Chronological considerations indicate that he had at that time long since passed the border between youth and manhood. Jōḥannān became bishop over Mardē, Dārā, Ḥabūrā, Kephartūtā and Tel Bešmē. According to his biography, Jōḥannān lived seventy-seven years and directed his episcopacy for thirty-eight years[6]. When he died, he was in full harness. The evening of all his days came to him on the

[1] Lit. «from place».

[2] ܐܝܠܝܢ ܐܬܪ̈ܘܬܐ ܚܪ̈ܒܢ ܡܕܝ̈ܢܬܐ ܗܢܝܢ ܡܫܡ̈ܗܬܐ ܪܝܫܥܝܢܐ ܘܕܪܐ ܘܟܦܪܬܘܬܐ ܘܡܪܕܐ ܘܕܝܪ̈ܬܐ ܕܐܬܪ̈ܘܬܐ ܥܡ ܡܕܝ̈ܢܬܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܚܪ̈ܒܢ ܘܨܕܝ̈ ܕܝܪ̈ܝܐ ܡܢ ܠܓܡܪ ܡܢ ܐܬܪ ܠܐܬܪ, *The Synodicon of the West Syrian Tradition* II, ed. Vööbus, p. 209_{29}-210_{2}.

[3] Wright, *A Short History of Syriac Literature*, p. 244ff.; Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, p. 293f.; Chabot, *Littérature syriaque*, p. 62.

[4] *Chronique*, éd. Chabot IV, p. 630f., 633.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 630.

[6] *The Synodicon of the West Syrian Tradition* II, p. 201.

twelfth of July in the year 1165 A. D.[7]. He was laid to rest in the *bēt qadīšē* of the Monastery of Mār Ḥanānyā which he had restored.

Bar ʿEbrāyā's comments on Jōḥannān[8], however, require circumspection. It is a matter of deep regret that in the anonymous chronicle there is a great gap[9]. In view of this situation, the discovery[10] of a new source about such an important person and that, moreover from the pen of so great an author as Mīka'ēl Rābā himself, is most welcome. A better reporter on Jōḥannān is not to be expected. This very precious record has come down to us in a very ancient codex[11] and, in addition, in three younger manuscripts[12].

There is a cycle of texts which, to a greater or lesser degree, go back to Jōḥannān himself and it is invaluable for it tells us in a detailed way about his activities. The autobiographical notes and comments which Jōḥannān himself had included both in marginal notes and notations, and in the colophons of manuscripts which he had produced, have been collected by several anonymous hands, as well as expanded. In this fashion, a good deal of information has been preserved for us. Two texts have been known in the west[13]. This source has been made available in the edition by Assemani[14].

We are very fortunate that a very surprising discovery has put an invaluable document into our hands. This has emerged in a very precious and unique manuscript[15]. Our document has been included in the volume of the Synodicon of the West Syrian Church regarding whose existence there had been no trace in historical sources. This is a corpus of the synodical acts of the West Syrian Church[16]. The new codex has included texts, all different, from three other manuscripts, — in serial

[7] On the 12th in the month of Tāmmūz 1476 A. Gr.

[8] *Chronicon eccl.*, ed. Abbeloos-Lamy II, col. 499ff.

[9] *Chronicon ad ann. 1234 pertinens*, ed. Chabot II, p. 306.

[10] Vööbus, «Entdeckung des Panegyrikus über Jōḥannān von Mardē», p. 204ff.

[11] Ms. Damascus Patr. 12/15, fol. 479a-481b; this parchment volume comes from the 12th cent.

[12] Ms. Mardin Orth. 176, Vööbus, *Syriac Manuscripts*; Ms. Mardin Orth. 144, see *ibid.*; Ms. Zaʿfarān 2/23, nr. 21 in the collection.

[13] One has been preserved in Ms. Vatican Syr. 96, fol. 32b-36b, written about 1352 A. D. The other has been preserved in Ms. Vatican Syr. 37, fol. 153a-156a, written in the year 1627 A. D.

[14] *Bibliotheca orient.* II, p. 217ff.

[15] Ms. Damascus Patr. 8/11, fol. 202b-209b.

[16] *The Synodicon* II, p. 201-208.

order, a lengthy text[17], then pieces[18], and last, a somewhat adumbrated version[19].

Comments from Jōḥannān himself include an autobiographical note[20] about his origin and home. He came from ʾŪrhāi where he was born and raised. He speaks with deep reverence of his parents and their part in his life. In ʾŪrhāi, he also received his monastic training and lived the monastic life in the mountains of Edessa[21].

2. The Inspiration Received by Jōḥannān

The sources which have come into our hands allow us insights into the way Jōḥannān came to the idea of undertaking such an action — a real apostolate. Of his motivations, he has the following to say: «I was busy and thinking about myself — to have a pursuit[1] and to assume and to try to be in silence and to accomplish my feeble life alone and in silence; there, however, came suddenly upon me an impulse[2] without (my own will)»[3]. About this impulse and its consequences he speaks reluctantly but still allows us some important insights when he admits: «Indeed, I am ashamed to mention or to assume a name which is perhaps an ignominy to those to whom I am a (spiritual) father and a bishop — to accept the pursuit[4] of the apostles (like) Peter and John; from that time on I was coerced in whatever way by the holy brothers, those who were with me»[5]. The last hint is very suggestive. In this connection, we should note that the case of Jōḥannān reflects interesting relations between ʾŪrhāi and Mardē for Jōḥannān's predecessor Basilios, also named Bar ʿAbbas, also came from ʾŪrhāi, and after his resignation returned to ʾŪrhāi to resume his former life in monasticism there[6].

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 201-208.
[18] *Ibid.*, p. 208.
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 209-210. The same text appears in Ms. Mardin Orth. 323, fol. 65a-70a, see VÖÖBUS, *Syriac Manuscripts*.
[20] Ms. Damascus Patr. 8/11, fol. 203a.
[21] *The Synodicon* II, p. 203.
[1] Or.: «practice».
[2] Lit.: «action».
[3] ܟܕ ܗܘܝܬ ܗܘܝܬ ܘܡܬܚܫܒ ܗܘܝܬ ܒܢܦܫܝ ܕܐܚܘܕ ܕܘܒܪܐ. ܐܣܒ ܘܐܫܬܘܐ ܠܡܗܘܐ ܒܫܠܝܐ ܘܐܫܠܡ ܚܝܝ ܡܚܝܠܐ ܠܚܘܕܝܬ ܒܫܠܝܐ ܐܓܒܪ. ܡܫܠܡ ܕܝܢ ܦܓܥ ܒܝ ܦܘܪܫܢܐ ܠܐ ܒܨܒܝܢܝ. *The Synodicon* II, p. $205_{8\text{-}10}$.
[4] Or.: «practice».
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 205.
[6] MICHAEL SYRUS, *Chronique*, éd. CHABOT IV, p. 630.

The dismal impact on Jōḥannān upon his arrival in Ṭūr ʿAbdīn is related in the short biography[7] as follows: «When by the grace of God this holy father, the said Mār Jōḥannān came from the holy mountain of ʾŪrhāi to this place, he saw this monastery of Mār Ḥanānyā and that the Kurds were wintering in it for lack of the dwellers (namely) the monks»[8]. He soon realized that the situation was far more dismal than he thought. He found that: «In the entire land not even a single monk from our Syrian nation (was to be found) in one of its monasteries»[9]. His stunned impression is reflected in another statement: «Because in all the Orient, that is to say, 'the mountain of the servants', namely in Ṭūr ʿAbdīn, and in the diocese of Mardē there was not a single monk — it was not even known what monks were like»[10]. This was what he faced in this once celebrated paradise of many monastic communities, and he set himself there to the enormous task of recreating it, one which gradually developed into a large-scale restoration work[11]. It meant exhuming life from the grave: «He then built monasteries which had been ruined for two hundred or three hundred years and more, and no one even knew any more the names of the monasteries at all»[12].

3. The Restoration of Great Monasteries

Jōḥannān's report about the first monastery to undergo restoration reads as follows: «When we came and arrived at this monastery of Šīrā de-Neṭāphā[1] which is above the Monastery of Mār Ḥanānyā, we saw in

[7] This biography has been preserved in Ms. Damascus Patr. 8/11, fol. 205b-206b.
[8] ܕܟܕ ܒܛܝܒܘܬܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܐܬܐ ܗܢܐ ܐܒܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܐܡܝܪ ܡܪܝ، ܝܘܚܢܢ ܡܢ ܛܘܪܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܐܘܪܗܝ، ܠܐܬܪܐ ܗܢܐ ܘܚܙܐ ܗܢܐ ܥܘܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝ، ܚܢܢܝܐ ܘܟܘܪ̈ܕܝܐ ܕܡܣܬܬܝܢ ܒܗ ܒܚܣܝܪܘܬܐ ܡܢ ܟܠ ܕܝܖ̈ܝܐ ܥܡܘܖ̈ܐ. *The Synodicon* II, p. $210_{13\text{-}16}$.
[9] ܘܐܦܠܐ ܒܟܠܗ ܐܬܪܐ ܗܘܐ ܥܡܝܪ ܒܗ ܒܚܕܐ ܡܢ ܕܝܖ̈ܬܗ ܚܕ ܕܝܪܝܐ, *ibid.*, p. $205_{16\text{-}17}$.
[10] ܕܒܡܕܢܚܐ ܟܠܗ. ܗܘ ܕܝܢ ܒܛܘܪܐ ܕܥܒܕ̈ܐ ܐܡܪܝܢ ܒܛܘܪ ܥܒܕܝܢ. ܘܒܡܪܕܝܢܘܬܐ ܕܡܖ̈ܕܐ ܘܠܐ ܚܕ ܕܝܪܝܐ ܐܝܬ ܗܘܐ ܒܗܘܢ. ܐܦܠܐ ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܝܖ̈ܝܐ ܝܕܝܥ. *The Synodicon* II, p. $205_{3\text{-}6}$.
[11] VÖÖBUS, «Restorationswerk des Jōḥannān», p. 137f.
[12] ܟܕ ܐܦ ܕܝܖ̈ܬܐ ܕܚܪ̈ܝܒܢ ܗܘܘ ܡܢ ܡܐܬܝܢ ܫܢܝܢ ܘܬܠܬܡܐܐ ܫܢܝܢ ܘܝܬܝܪ. ܘܠܐ ܐܢܫ ܝܕܥ ܗܘܐ ܐܦܠܐ ܫܡܗܐ ܕܕܝܖ̈ܬܐ ܡܟܘܠ. *Ibid.*, p. $202_{14\text{-}16}$.
[1] In Syriac ܕܢܛܘܦܐ, i.e. «drop», in Arabic دير القطرة Deir al-Qatarah.

the Monastery of Netaphā (some traces of) the holy solitaries[2] those who were (there) before the ravaging in this place»[3]. This monastery was located east of Mardin, in the vicinity of Deir Za'farān[4], and it was an ancient one. It is mentioned, too, among the monasteries which were affected by the storm of persecutions of the Monophysites. During these vexations, the monastic community was stricken so severely that the community had to endure seven years in exile under Sargīs and Anṭūn, who apparently were abbots[5]. A new era dawned for this monastery when Mār Ḥanānyā became bishop of Mardin and Kephartūtā. At that time, the monastic community was large and the monks stood out for their way of asceticism. Mār Ḥanānyā is reported to have given new rules to the monastic community[6] contributing to further progress in the monastic life[6]. Mār Ḥanānyā also carried out a building program, enlarging the facilities of the monastery. He even made the monastery his residence and lived there for twenty-three years. In this monastery he also died about the year 816[7].

It is reported that his successor Ignatios, consecrated by Patriarch Qyriaqos, continued the work of Mār Ḥanānyā to the benefit of the monastery. The buildings were expanded and a church was beautified. The record also speaks of a large library: «They collected and established in this holy place sacred books of various kinds and amassed them in the *bēt gazē*[8] of this monastery of Mār Ḥanānyā»[9]. Nothing of this treasury chamber of literary works has survived.

[2] ܚܣܝ̈ܐ.

[3] ܕܒܗ ܐܬܐܡ ܘܡܟܠܝܢ ܠܕܘܡܪܐ ܗܘܐ ܕܗܢܐ ܕܢܛܦܐ ܕܝܠܗ ܕܠܟܠ ܡܢ ܒܕܘܡܪܐ ܕܗܢܐ، ܚܣܝܐ ܘܚܣܝܢ ܒܕܘܡܪܐ ܕܢܛܦܐ ܚܣܝ̈ܕܐ ܡܕ̈ܝܢܬܐ ܘܐܬܬ ܒܗ .... ܡܕܝܢ ܡܢ ܡܕܢ ܣܘܟܐ ܕܐܬܪܐ, *ibid.*, p. $208_{24\text{-}27}$.

[4] BAR 'EBRAYA, *Chronicon eccl.* II, col. 521; cf. «La vie de Benjamin», éd. SCHEIL, p. 64. New sources emerge in Ms. Šarfeh 252; Ms. Mosul Orth., a collection of biographies and ascetic materials, has no signature; our vita appears on fol. 30b-46a.

[5] MICHAEL SYRUS, *Chronique*, p. 266.

[6] ܘܣܡ ܠܗܘܢ ܢܡܘ̈ܣܐ ܥܕ̈ܬܢܝܐ ܘܛܟ̈ܣܐ ܘܩܢܘ̈ܢܐ ܒܪ̈ܬܢܝܐ ܐܒܗ̈ܝܐ. «He set up for them ecclesiastical, patristic laws (νόμος), orders (τάξις) and canons (κανών)», *The Synodicon* II, p. $209_{16\text{-}17}$.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 209; cf. MICHAEL SYRUS, *Chronique* IV, p. 488.

[8] ܒܝܬ ܓܙܐ «treasure house».

[9] ܘܟܢܫܢ ܘܣܡܢ ܒܗ ܒܕܘܟܬܐ ܩܕܝܫܬܐ ܟܬܒ̈ܐ ܩܕ̈ܝܫܐ ܕܟܠ ܙܢܝܢ ܘܣܡܢ ܐܢܘܢ ܒܒܝܬ ܓܙܐ ܕܒܕܘܡܪܐ ܕܗܢܐ، ܚܢܢܝܐ ܗܘܐ, *ibid.*, p. $209_{24\text{-}26}$.

Jōḥannān of Mardē undertook to revive this famous place then in ruins, a place which had so closely been connected with the celebrated memory of Mār Ḥanānyā: «We took care and we gathered many monks and we renewed in it a large community of monks, of excellent men»[10]. Then, he began energetically to foster the needs of the newly established community, shaping its life and discipline. Of this we are told in a very crisp fashion: «We set up for them ecclesiastical and spiritual laws[11], orders[12] and canons[13] which adorn all spiritual virtues»[14].

The next monastery to be restored was one of great fame, «the Monastery of Mār Ḥanānyā»[15]. The fate which had visited countless monasteries had also struck the monastery founded by Mār Ḥanānyā[16]. Under just which exact circumstances the destruction of the monastery had taken place and just when its life was finally extinguished, of that we have no information. When Išō'denaḥ composed his church history in the middle of the ninth century or a little later, life went throbbing in this celebrated monastic community[17]; other information tells us that in the year 1000 the monastery was still existing[18].

However, in the case of the Monastery of Mār Ḥanānyā, that destruction was not to become the last chapter. It was to come to life once again. Jōḥannān describes his experiences on seeing this famous place in desolation: «Then I saw this famous and holy monastery, the Monastery of Mār Ḥanānyā, which was emulous in previous times, not only for decorations of all kinds or for the contribution in human workmanship of (its) skilled artisans, or for the melted nature with rays of light (reflecting) from old and valuable and precious stones, according to that which the (sacred) book tells us regarding the temple which the King

[10] ܘܐܚܕܢ ܘܟܢܫܢ ܕܝܪ̈ܝܐ ܣܓܝ̈ܐܐ ܘܚܕܬܢ ܒܗ ܟܢܘܫܝܐ ܪܒܐ ܕܕܝܪ̈ܝܐ ܓܒܪ̈ܐ ܡܝܬܪ̈ܐ, *ibid.*, p. $208_{27\text{-}28}$.

[11] νόμος.

[12] τάξις.

[13] κανών.

[14] ܘܣܡܢ ܠܗܘܢ ܢܡܘ̈ܣܐ ܥܕ̈ܬܢܝܐ ܘܛܟ̈ܣܐ ܘܩܢܘ̈ܢܐ ܒܪ̈ܬܢܝܐ ܪܘܚܢܝܐ ܕܡܨܒܬܝܢ ܒܟܠ ܥܘܬܪ̈ܝܢ ܪܘܚܢܝܐ, *ibid.*, p. 208_{28}-209_{2}.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 203.

[16] See page 388.

[17] See an exerpt in MICHAEL SYRUS, *Chronique* IV, p. 489.

[18] Ms. Berlin Wet. II, 1100, cf. AHLWARDT, *Verzeichnis arabischer Handschriften* VII, p. 309f. See also ŠABUŠTI, *Das Klosterbuch*, p. 13f.

Solomon built[19]»[20]. Jōḥannān also adds that he had a particular motivation to prosecute this undertaking — famous teachers had come from this place: «These famous (teachers) are: Mār Mōšē bar Kēphā (and) Mār Iwannīs, the bishop of the town of Dārā»[21]. Jōḥannān is more specific about the once learned community in this monastery when he adds: «In this monastery they dwelt and were raised and they have been enlightened through the books by study among these saints who were living here at that time»[22]. In conjuring up the glorious past, Jōḥannān's experience cut deep into his soul: «How instead of the bodily angels, that is to say, the divine teachers and the holy ascetics[23] and monks, the monastery was (now) full of Arabs, Kurds, the lads, laymen, women, boys and girls, — a great sorrow was in my heart when I saw them in it»[24].

With regard to the restoration of the Monastery of Mār Ḥanānyā, other manuscript sources have preserved information which must come from the channels already described[25].

After re-establishing the monastic community, Jōḥannān saw to economic sources for the well-being of the monastery: «He multiplied for it large endowments, fields, gardens, orchards, mills[26], shops and many homes in Mardin, this our town»[27]. With the same zeal did he provide the monastic community with literary riches: «And all the books which are in this monastery, new and old, the holy one himself brought them from the mountain of ʾŪrhāi»[28]. The same is said about things which were necessary to equip the sanctuary for liturgical purposes.

19 Cf. 1 Kings V, 1ff.

20 [illegible], *The Synodicon* II, p. 203_{27}-204_{6}.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 204.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 204.

23 [illegible] *ʿanwāyē*.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 204f.

25 Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 38, fol. 180a-181a; Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 252, fol. 18b-19b.

26 A detailed account of the mills appears in a another recension, *Bibliotheca orient.*, ed. Assemani II, p. 226.

27 [illegible]. *The Synodicon II*, p. 210.

28 [illegible], *ibid.*, p. $210_{22\text{-}24}$.

Actually, the very first monastery in the list presented in these sources, is introduced as follows: «The Monastery of Mār Daniʾēl which is called Galaš in the mountain of Berʿīh and which is near Līsōn, the Ṭūr Qarīrā»[29]. A little later the same source describes the same monastery in the following way: «Again another monastery of the glorious Mār Daniʾēl which is above the Ḥesnā of Berʿīh»[30]. Another recension of this source reads somewhat differently: «Mār Daniʾēl, called ʾAgleš, that is in the mountain of Berʿīh»[31]. It is known that this monastery was founded by Daniʾēl of Galaš[32], and became a very celebrated community. The commemoration day of the saint was held on May 2[33] and had attracted great multitudes. The location of this monasteric community was near Tel Bešmē.

The second monastery which actually appears on the list is introduced in the following way: «The Monastery of Mār Dimaṭ, below the castle of Ḥārū ʿAbar which is called the New Monastery»[34]. The same source a little later describes the work of restoration more fully: «Another large and famous monastery is by the side of Ḥūrū ʿAbar in the place which is called Bēt Ṭabītā; it is in the valley of Bēt ʿArqā to the east of Ḥūrū ʿAbar»[35]. The new appearance of this monastery, resuscitated from its ruins, is described in the following way: «There are holy monks in it, those who with their labor and care built the well of the monastery, the temple, the *bēt qadīšē* and the cells»[36]. From the history of the monastery we learn that it was built in the name of the Virgin Mary and Dometios[37], a martyr who was a Persian and a physician by profession. His commemoration day was held on September 24[38] which made this

29 [illegible], *ibid.*, p. $203_{5\text{-}7}$.

30 [illegible], *ibid.*, p. $206_{17\text{-}18}$.

31 [illegible], *Bibliotheca orient.*, p. 228.

32 Ms. Mardin Orth. 273, p. 279-316; Ms. Mardin Orth. 259, nr. 3.

33 *Le martyrologe*, éd. Peeters, p. 182.

34 [illegible], *The Synodicon* II, p. $203_{4\text{-}8}$.

35 [illegible], *ibid.*, p. $206_{3\text{-}5}$.

36 [illegible], *ibid.*, p. $206_{6\text{-}7}$.

37 *Ibid.*, p. 206.

38 *Le martyrologe*, éd. Peeters, p. 161.

place a location of attraction for great masses. The monastery was a celebrated center[39].

Another once great monastery to be restored is introduced in the following way: «And the great Monastery of Mār Athanasios, the bishop and patriarch, which was (very) large and famous, and three churches were built there»[40]. Again it is stated: «The famous monastery of the Patriarch Athanasios who is called Sandālā is near the village of Tellā de-Besmē[41]»[42]. The other recension of the same source gives only a slightly different description[43]. The monastery was located near the village of Tel Besmē. As we have already seen, the monastery was founded by Athanasios Sandālā[44]. Jōḥannān gives a little more information of the appearance of the restored monastery: «When I, the wretched one, saw the Kurds wintering in the monastery, we took up the monastery and we built it over the rock which is in the middle of the monastery and we made cells above it»[45].

4. The Restoration of Other Monasteries

The list continues: «the Monastery of Mar Gīwargīs, below the village of Šaʿbā»[1]. A little later, the same document introduces this monastery with more precision about its location: «Which is in the valley of the village of Šaʿbā, in the west of it, the village in the place which was called Bēt ʾEssē, and this was built in the name of Mār Gīwargīs, the glorious martyr»[2]. It is not known when and by whom this monastery

[39] Armalet, *Les couvents de Mardin*, p. 673.

[40] [illegible], *The Synodicon* II, p. $203_{15\text{-}17}$.

[41] Tell Besmē has been identified with Bismedeon which appears in Procopius, *De aedificiis* II, 6, p. 65; cf. Tussaud, *Topographie historique*, p. 491.

[42] [illegible], *ibid.*, p. $206_{12\text{-}14}$.

[43] *Bibliotheca orient.*, p. 222.

[44] See page 375f.

[45] [illegible], *The Synodicon* II, p. $206_{12\text{-}16}$.

[1] [illegible], *The Synodicon* II, p. $203_{8\text{-}9}$.

[2] [illegible]

was founded except only that the cult of this saint was very popular among the Syrians.

«The (monastery) of Mār Barṣaumā, the bishop, which is near the village of Ḥašri and towards the village of Būgdašīh»[3]. In the same source, the monastery is introduced once more together with some additional features: «Another monastery that of Mār Barṣaumā, the bishop and martyr, which was ruined to the (very) ground, is by the side of the two villages, Telqābab and Būgadšīh»[4]. The other recension of the same source introduces this monastery in in a more matter of fact way: «Again another monastery — of Mār Barṣaumā, which was ruined to the (very) ground, that is by the side of two villages, Telqabāb and Begadših»[5]. We lack full clarity about the founding of this particular monastery, built in the memory of Mār Barṣaumā. The reputation of the famous abbot Barṣaumā[6], widely celebrated[7], has inspired the building of several monasteries in his memory[8].

«The monastery of Mār Stephanos, which is Mār Būkrā[9], that is, near the village of Rīšmīl and the village of Benebīl»[10]. Once again, the same source introduces this monastery in a slightly different way: «Again another is of Mār Būkrā which is the holy Mār Stephanos, the first born of the martyrs and the first of the deacons, which is by the side of the village of Benebīl and the village of Rīšmīl»[11]. According to another

[illegible], *ibid.*, p. $206_{8\text{-}10}$.

[3] [illegible], *ibid.*, p. $203_{9\text{-}10}$.

[4] [illegible], *ibid.*, p. $206_{24\text{-}26}$.

[5] [illegible], *Bibliotheca orient.* II, p. 222.

[6] Unknown sources could be discovered for the vita of Barṣaumā: Ms. Mard. Orth. 256, p. 378ff.; Ms. Mardin Orth. 273, p. 47-279, See Vööbus, *Syriac Manuscripts*. Ms. Aleppo Orth. 27; Ms. Midyat Melki 7; Ms. Damascus Patr. 12/17.

[7] About a *mēmrā* by Michael Syrus in Ms. Damascus Patr. 9/16, fol. 28b-39b, see, «Discovery of a Panegyricus on Barṣaumā by Michael Syrus», ed. Vööbus.

[8] The most celebrated monastery was founded at Melitene. Honigmann, *Le couvent de Barṣaumā*.

[9] The Syriac term means «first born».

[10] [illegible], *The Synodicon* II, p. $203_{10\text{-}12}$.

[11] [illegible]

recension the name is Būkrē[12]. According to a report the Monastery of Mār Stephanos was not far from the Monastery of Qarṭāmīn[13].

«The (Monastery of) Mār Theodōṭā, which is near Ḥesnā of Ṣūrā»[14]. The same source a little later says «the Monastery of Theodōṭā: it is called the monastery of the village Qillet which is in Ṣūr Ḥesnā»[15]. Another recension of the same source should be quoted here, namely: «that is called the Monastery of Qelat that is east of Ṣūr Ḥesnā»[16]. It is known that one monastery was founded in the memory of Mār Theodōṭā, the celebrated ascetic, bishop and metropolitan of Amid[17], whose biography was discovered recently[18]. But this monastery was in the vicinity of Kuluk between Dārā and Amid[19], and not in Ṭūr ʿAbdīn. This was the most celebrated one. Another monastery was very close to the monastery of Abai. According to another source, it was also called the monastery of Qelat[20].

«(The Monastery of) Mār ʾAbai near Ṣūr[21] Ḥesnā»[22]. The same source a little later refers to the same monastery as «the Monastery of the brilliant Mār ʾAbai»[23]. The other recension of the same source repeats essentially the same[24]. According to the testimony of a note in a Syriac manuscript[25], the monastery was located at the village of Kullith, near Ṣurā in Ṭūr ʿAbdīn. It was located north of the village[26]. The monastery was among the centers of pilgrimage because it had been dedicated to the

ܘܕܡܪܝ ܐ ܕܩܘܡܘܢ ܘܩܘܪܝܐ ܕܩܪܛܡܝܢ. ܕܥܠ ܓܢܒ ܟܢܫܐ ܘܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܘܡܬܪܐ, *ibid.*, p. $206_{21\text{-}23}$.

12 *Bibliotheca orient.* II, p. 228.

13 SANDRECZKI, *Reise nach Mosul und durch Kurdistan*, p. 350.

14 ܘܕܡܪܝ, ܬܐܘܕܘܛܐ ܕܩܪܝܒܐ ܠܨܘܪܐ ܚܨܢܐ, *The Synodicon* II, p. 203_{12}.

15 ܘܕܝܪܐ ܐܚܪܢܐ ܕܡܪܝ, ܬܐܘܕܘܛܐ. ܕܡܬܩܪܝܐ ܗ̇ܝ ܕܝܪܐ ܕܩܪܝܬܐ ܕܩܠܬ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܕܗܝ ܒܡܕܢܚܐ ܕܨܘܪ ܚܨܢܐ, *ibid.*, p. $206_{1\text{-}3}$.

16 ܕܡܬܩܪܝܐ ܗ̇ܝ ܕܝܪܐ ܕܩܠܬ ܕܗܝ ܡܕܢܚܐ ܕܨܘܪ ܚܨܢܐ, *Bibliotheca orient.*, p. 221.

17 VÖÖBUS, «Découverte de la biographie de Théodoṭe», p. 39ff.

18 He occupied his episcopal office from 697 to 713.

19 ARMALET, *Les couvents de Mardin*, p. 762.

20 ASSEMANI, *Dissertatio*, p. 10.

21 Ṣūr is located in the Western part of the Qoros Mountains.

22 ܘܕܡܪܝ, ܐܒܝ ܕܩܪܝܒܐ ܠܨܘܪ ܚܨܢܐ, *The Synodicon* II, p. 203_{15}.

23 ܕܝܪܐ ܚܕܐ ܕܡܪܝ, ܐܒܝ ܢܨܝܚܐ, *ibid.*, p. 206.

24 *Bibliotheca orient.*, p. 228.

25 Ms. Berlin Sachau 241, SACHAU, *Verzeichnis* II, p. 814.

26 SACHAU, *Reise in Syrien und Mesopotamien*, p. 420.

memory of ʿAbai who, according to the legendary story[27], was a Persian, Mihr Šabūr, who, after his conversion, was killed[28] by his own father, Adurpherozgerd[29]. His martyrdom was supposed to have taken place in Ṭūr ʿAbdīn. His commemoration day was celebrated on October 1st[30]. However, exact information about the founding of the monastery is lacking. But it is known that in the year 521, when the storm of persecution embrazed the Monophysite monasteries, the monastery of ʿAbai was struck along with others[31]. The ruins of the monastery are still extant[32].

«The monastery of Šemīṭiē or of Ḥefiayē, Ḥefaʿi which is by the side of the village of Telbesmi»[33]. Also, the other version of the same source, which is shorter, essentially says the same[34]. Unfortunately, nothing is known from the historical sources about the origin and the history of this monastic foundation.

The next monastery is introduced as: «Another monastery which is on the river of Kabūr, which is Ḥabūrā, by the side of the village of Ṭaʾbān and the village of Sīḥemīh on the river of Ḥabūrā»[35]. The other recension of this same source does not help us to locate the monastery more precisely. Then «the Monastery of Eliah that is Leḥepā»[36].

5. Concluding Comments on the Restoration Work

That which is unfolded in all of these texts constitutes but one part of a still larger restoration project. We are presented with a very impressive list of restored monasteries and churches; we are told that Mār Jōḥannān

27 PEETERS, *Bibliotheca hagiographica orient.*, p. 169.

28 Ms. Mardin Orth. 268, p. 469ff.

29 So in *Le martyrologe*, éd. PEETERS, p. 139 and not Mihr Šabūr as in the legend in Ms. Paris Syr. 275, fol. 496.

30 *Martyrologes et ménologes orientaux*, éd. NAU, p. 193; *Le martyrologe*, éd. PEETERS, p. 193.

31 MICHAEL SYRUS, *Chronique* IV, p. 267.

32 POGNON, *Inscriptions sémitiques*, p. 186.

33 ܘܕܝܪܐ ܕܫܡܝܛܝܐ ܐܘܟܝܬ ܕܚܦܝܝܐ ܗ ܚܦܥܐ, ܕܥܠ ܓܢܒ ܬܠܒܣܡܝ ܩܪܝܬܐ, *The Synodicon* II, p. $203_{17\text{-}18}$.

34 *Bibliotheca orient.*, p. 228f.

35 ܘܬܘܒ ܕܝܪܐ ܐܚܪܬܐ ܗ, ܐܝܬܝܗ ܥܠ ܢܗܪ ܚܒܘܪ. ܕܗܘ ܚܒܘܪܐ ܥܠ ܓܢܒ ܛܥܒܢ ܩܪܝܬܐ. ܘܣܝܚܡܝܗ ܩܪܝܬܐ ܕܥܠ ܢܗܪܐ ܕܚܒܘܪܐ, *The Synodicon* II, p. $206_{18\text{-}20}$.

36 *Bibliotheca orient.*, II, p. 228.

of Mardē built five large and twenty-four smaller churches[1]. According to another recension, the summary report reads: «He renewed up to the number of fifty churches and monasteries as his story demonstrates»[2].

These sources also throw light upon the extraordinary qualities and skills which were embodied in a man fully able to carry out his apostolate. He put all of his aptitudes and abilities wholeheartedly into his restoration work. Not content only with transforming ruins, Jōḥannān also was determined to secure the existence and future of these establishments.

Among other talents, he had a firm grasp on practical matters and he extended his efforts to the economic area, as well. His biography states that: «He, indeed, was bright in every occupation of the world»[3]. It is very instructive to note how he devoted his skills to his undertakings. An essential paragraph in this source reads as follows: «He expressed great care, diligence and pains for churches, (their) properties and substantial legacies which are useful for the churches and monasteries»[4]. The scale of his concern included the ecclesiastical paraphernalia and liturgical vessels to be used in newly restored sanctuaries in the monasteries and churches like «bowls[5], cups, censers[6], crosses, fans (made) of gold and silver; he bequeathed them to the churches together with chairs, chests[7], curtains[8], anaphoras[9], etc»[10]. He turned his energies to the procurement of high quality exemplars[11].

The restoration work involved much more. Life created from the ruins

[1] *The Synodicon* II, p. 202.

[2] ܚܕܬ ܐܘܟܝܬ ܒܡܢܝܢܐ ܠܚܡܫܝܢ ܥܕ̈ܬܐ ܘܕܝܪ̈ܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܡܘܕܥܐ ܬܫܥܝܬܗ, *ibid.*, p. $210_{28\text{-}29}$.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 202.

[4] ܘܐܚܘܝ ܗܘܐ ܠܗ ܚܦܝܛܘܬܐ ܘܬܘܟܠܬܐ ܘܫܩܠܘܬܐ ܥܠ ܥܕ̈ܬܐ ܘܩܢ̈ܝܢܐ ܘܫܘܒ̈ܩܢܐ ܪ̈ܘܪܒܐ. ܕܒܗܘܢ, *ibid.*, p. $208_{10\text{-}12}$.

[5] φιάλη.

[6] πύρωμα.

[7] κίβωτος.

[8] βῆλον, velum.

[9] ἀναφορά.

[10] ܐܝܟ ܦܝ̈ܠܐ ܘܐܝܟ ܟܣ̈ܐ ܘܐܝܟ ܦܝܪ̈ܡܐ ܘܨܠܝ̈ܒܐ ܘܡܪ̈ܘܚܬܐ ܕܕܗܒܐ ܘܕܣܐܡܐ ܫܒܩ ܗܘܐ ܠܥܕ̈ܬܐ ܐܝܟ ܟܘܪ̈ܣܘܬܐ ܘܩܡ̈ܛܪܐ ܘܒܝ̈ܠܘܢܐ ܘܐܢܐܦܘܪ̈ܐ ܘܕܐܝܟ ܗܠܝܢ, *ibid.*, p. $208_{12\text{-}14}$.

[11] Through his friends, the merchants, he obtained some of these precious liturgical vessels from Alexandria.

needed sustenance from every possible direction. Jōḥannān of Mardē is credited with the renewal of the national Syriac language. A very important statement reads: «He restored the language which had disappeared completely, the reading and the tongue of the sarcerdotal books, our Syriac (idiom) in this land»[12]. It is gratifying to hear more about this aspect of his restoration work from these sources. The most important passus must here be recorded: «He raised our paternal Syriac speech and language — which was obsolete during his time — from its deadness to life and he enlivened it in schools and in the teaching which he established, besides (other things)»[13].

Such a renaissance needed still other undertakings to undergird it. Jōḥannān saw to it that the communities in the restored places were supplied with the necessary books. Our sources provide us with fascinating glimpses into the life of this figure; they depict this hero working in practically every direction. We are told: «Mār Jōḥannān, the hero[14] of this story, carefully fixed, restored[15] and bound many volumes of books (left) by the captives. They had been scattered and mutilated a long time ago»[16]. He was even able to provide the monasteries and churches with extraordinary exemplars of literary culture. It is quite understandable that the compilators of notes and comments written by Jōḥannān's hand were particularly impressed with the luxury exemplars — liturgical books written in gold and silver ink and furnished with miniatures and therefore specially registered in the genre of scriptural manuscripts with «all kinds of copies of the gospels and Greek lectionaries[17]»[18]. Such «amazing exemplars» in various colors and furnished with miniatures

[12] ܘܗܦܟܗ ܕܓܠܠ ܘܐܙܠ ܠܓܡܪܐ ܘܩܪܝܢܐ ܘܠܫܢܐ ܕܟܬܒ̈ܐ ܟܗܢ̈ܝܐ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ ܕܝܠܢ ܒܗܢܐ ܐܬܪܐ, *ibid.*, p. $210_{26\text{-}27}$.

[13] ܘܠܫܢܐ ܐܒܗܝܐ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ ܕܝܠܢ ܕܒܙܒܢܗ ܗܘܐ ܚܣܝܪ ܡܢ ܡܝܬܘܬܗ ܘܐܚܝܗ ܒܡܕܪ̈ܫܐ ܘܒܡܠܦܢܘܬܐ ܕܐܩܝܡ ܘܣܓܝ̈ܐܬܐ, *ibid.*, p. $202_{12\text{-}14}$.

[14] Lit.: «master».

[15] Lit.: «united».

[16] ܗܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܡܪܝ ܝܘܚܢܢ ܡܪܐ ܬܫܥܝܬܐ ܗܕܐ ܒܠܥܕܐ ܐܦܩܢܐ ܕܬܡ ܥܣ̈ܩܐ ܘܚܒܫ ܟܬܒ̈ܐ ܣܓܝ̈ܐܐ ܕܫܒܝ̈ܐ. ܕܡܒܕܪ̈ܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܘܡܚܒܠܝܢ ܡܢ ܙܒܢܐ ܣܓܝܐܐ, *ibid.*, p. $208_{4\text{-}5}$.

[17] It is not very clear what is meant by these Greek lectionaries. He may mean here lectionaries in Syriac but patterned according to the Byzantine models in their arrangements; however, he may also mean the lectionaries with the Harclean version, very servile to the Greek original and even idiom.

[18] ܕܟܠ ܓܢܣ ܢܘܣ̈ܟܐ ܐܘܢܓܠܝ̈ܘܢ ܘܦܪܟܣ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܘܢܘܣ̈ܟܐ, *ibid.*, p. $208_{6\text{-}7}$.

have overshadowed other manuscripts provided by him to the monasteries and churches. That Jōḥannān produced all of the truly amazing volumes but of a different genre, of this we have impressive evidence[19].

Jōḥannān's efforts to bring about the renaissance of literary culture in Syriac aimed at goals even farther afield. In his many-sided creative work, Jōḥannān also turned his hand to the creation of original Syriac literature. One extensive work[20] has been remembered because of the fact that the subject matter dealt with God's providence and the alleged promise given to 'Ūrhāi in connection with the story of Abgar. Because of the acuteness of his presentation, it had enjoyed wide attention. The work has not survived; citations from it are found in the annalistic work of Michael Syrus[21]. There is also a record to the effect that he composed a work in the area of exegesis, producing something like a catena commentary on the Old and New Testament[22]. Even a chronological datum has been preserved — he is supposed to have written it in the year 1156 A.D. In my search and recovery effort, no trace of this work has surfaced so far. That Jōḥannān had to deal particularly with liturgical texts is readily apparent. The manuscript tradition has kept a remembrance of the author in the genre of liturgical discipline[23].

Such a large scale and enormous restoration work, indeed, constitutes a very bright chapter in the history of Ṭūr ʿAbdīn. His biographer, in retrospect, characterizes Jōḥannān both as a person with respect to his works as a unique phenomenon: «Indeed, this holy one was just and great, a teacher and a wise man: he, indeed, was bright in every occupation of the world, understanding and merciful[24]; in him all the

[19] A very precious sample has survived which belongs to the genre of liturgical homiliaries. Ms. Damascus Patr. 12/15 is a collection of literary treatises containing the *mēmrē* of Jaʿqōb of Serūg and other texts. This luxury edition on parchment in its colophon states that this gigantic collection was arranged by the care of Jōḥannān of Mardē. About these riches incorporated into this volume, see VÖÖBUS, *Handschriftliche Überlieferung der Mēmrē-Dichtung des Jaʿqōb von Serūg* I, p. 144. About the historical importance of such literary monument, see VÖÖBUS, «Ausserordentliche Entdeckung im Genre der syrischen Homiliarien», p. 185ff.

[20] BAUMSTARK, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, p. 293f., 354.

[21] MICHAEL SYRUS, *Chronique* IV, p. 633ff.

[22] PARRY, *Six Months in a Syrian Monastery*, p. 83.

[23] Ms. Jerusalem Mark 110, written in the year 1276/7 A.D., contains a cycle of writings about consecration. This is a codex which has remained unknown, see BAUMSTARK, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, p. 294, 354; see also his «Liturgische Handschriften», p. 103ff.

[24] In this connection it is proper to remember a tradition which has retained one episode speaking of the warmth of his charity: After the conquest and pillage of 'Urhāi by

virtues were comprised — concerning him the word which the Lord said was fulfilled: 'There has arisen no one like him[25] in the church'»[26]. Jōḥannān has been described as a man with qualities which made his person easily accessible, thus enabling him to pave his way to the influential people whose help and assistance he needed. Even among the Syrian authorities, he is reported to have secured his place of esteem and honor[27].

As for the work of the restoration of ecclesiastical life, the biography reports that Jōḥannān ordained about seven hundred priests and deacons[28]. The impetus that he created for the revival of the Syrian communities was enormous. It also constituted a source for the attraction of ascetics and monks to his restored monasteries. His success on this and other fronts was an object of marvel and admiration. That Jōḥannān superseded even his own hopes is indicated by his own words. He is reported to have stated in connection of the new blossoming of life in the Monastery of Mār Ḥanānyā the following: «Therefore it was my prayer and my request to see in this holy monastery about twenty monks before I depart from this temporary life; God, however, heard my prayer through His grace — there were in the monastery about sixty monks during my lifetime»[29].

That which has been unfolded in all of these sources is, indeed, a description of a determined plan for a massive restoration of the debris, ruins, rubble, wrecks and waste of venerable institutions. The brief but concentrated notes about his accomplishments unequivocally confront us with the extent of the marvel produced by this monk from the mountains of 'Ūrhāi. On the basis of the facts put before us, we have to conclude that new life sprang up as if by the wave of a wand, new life for all these monasteries, churches and chapels erected for the communities which he gathered together. Everything in these sources testifies to the

ZENGUI, who brought inhabitants into slavery, he organized an action to redeem the fellow Christians from slavery. MICHAEL SYRUS, *Chronique* IV, p. 630.

[25] Cf. Matth. XI, 11.

[26] *The Synodicon* II, p. 202.

[27] MICHAEL SYRUS, *Chronique* IV, p. 630.

[28] *The Synodicon* II, p. 202.

[29] ܗܳܘܐ ܗܘܬ ܠܨܠܘܬܝ ܘܠܒܥܘܬܝ ܕܐܚܙܐ ܒܥܘܡܪܐ ܗܢܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܐܝܟ ܥܣܪܝܢ ܕܝܪܝܐ ܩܕܡ ܕܐܫܢܐ ܡܢ ܚܝܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܫܥܬܐ. ܐܠܐ ܐܝܟ ܗܘܐ. ܫܡܥ ܕܝܢ ܐܠܗܐ ܠܨܠܘܬܝ ܒܛܝܒܘܬܗ. ܘܗܘܐ ܒܗ ܒܥܘܡܪܐ ܒܚܝܝ ܐܝܟ ܫܬܝܢ ܕܝܪܝܐ, *ibid.*, p. $205_{24\text{-}27}$.

fact that with the work of Jōḥannān, a new wind of enlivening power began to sweep through the eparchy of Mardē, i.e. the region of Ṭūr ʿAbdīn. One senses that it was experienced like the arrival of springtime. It was to be the last springtime before more formidable catastrophes, destined to put Syrian Christian communities under the severest of tests for survival, were to arrive.

XIX. ATTEMPTS TO REVIVE THE LITERARY TREATMENT OF ASCETICISM

Athanasios Abū Ghalīb

a. *His Writings*

So thorough was the restoration of monastic life in Ṭūr ʿAbdīn under Jōḥannān of Mardē that it also aroused a stimulus, a revival of ascetic mystical works. Such stimuli were given by one who, indeed, had no rival in this period. We refer to Athanasios Abū Ghalīb.

Unfortunately, there has been much confusion about the person and his work. Wright introduced an Abū Ghalīb bar Sabūnī but, regrettably, this was not the right person. The Abū Ghalīb mentioned by Wright was raised to the episcopate of Edessa by Athanasios VII (1100-29) but he was soon deposed and died shortly after the death of the patriarch in 1129[1]. However, this person belonged to a different period in time and cannot be the author in whom we are interested. Baumstark followed Wright in accepting this information without questioning its value[2]. Nor in his latest treatment[3] did he rectify matters. Chabot[4] and also Ortiz de Urbina[5] fail to help us in this connection.

That which had been preserved of this author's labors and which has been known for a long time consists of only one section of his monastic ascetic work[6]. A very late copy of his work next emerged in the collection of manuscripts of Mingana[7]. Of it, we are told that the work contained «admonitions on the schema of monasticism»[8].

During my continuing forays to the Syrian Orient, new manuscript sources, which enable us to throw more light upon his literary activities

[1] *A Short History of Syriac Literature*, p. 243f.
[2] *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, p. 293.
[3] «Syrische Literatur».
[4] *Littérature syriaque*.
[5] *Patrologia syriaca*.
[6] Ms. Berlin Sachau 202, fol. 84aff.
[7] Ms. Birm. Ming. Syr. 118; MINGANA, *Catalogue* I, col. 281ff.
[8] ܡܘܪܝܐ ܕܥܠ ܐܣܟܝܡܐ ܕܕܝܪܝܘܬܐ.

and to study the contribution made by this author to asceticism and mysticism[9], have been discovered.

The hiding place for the source to be introduced first was found in the collection of manuscripts in the Church of Mār Tūmā[10] in Mosul. This document, which has no signature, is Ms. Mosul Mār Tūmā[11], a huge codex. The manuscript has no colophon and does not help us on chronological matters; on palaeographical grounds, the codex may be ascribed to the seventeenth century. This work bears the title: «Admonitions and exhortations on the schema of monasticism and anchoritism»[12]. It deals with the premises for the ascetic life. It issues a critique on the laxity of the manners, emphasizing the importance of discipline. A historical note, added to the work, includes the information that he had set up a canon «under anathema» to the effect that no one is to be served by a woman, except his own mother and sister. The work also deals with levels in the movement of progression to deeper aspects of spirituality. In every way the work is eclectic in character and depends heavily upon works produced by monasticism.

In addition to this, the manuscript search and recovery program has been rewarded by the discovery of other manuscript sources. In fact, a cycle of them can be brought forward. One was found in the collection of manuscripts in Šarfeh[13]. Another was discovered in the collection of manuscripts in the patriarchate of the West Syrian Church[14]. This is an extensive codex[15] furnished with a colophon[16].

There is a portion of his work which represents the oldest stratum in the transmission of the text. This source has emerged in a codex which comes from the collection of manuscripts in the Monastery of Mār Ḥanānyā or Deir Zaʿfarān, in Ṭūr ʿAbdīn, namely, Ms. Mardin Orth. 417. This codex is a very huge composite manuscript[17] which has incorporated many works of ascetic and mystical authors. A section of a work by Abū Ghalīb has been included in it. Carrying the title: «On Solitude»[18], it has been deemed worthy of standing side by side with works of eminent and celebrated authors[19]. It is the earliest layer which could be unearthed — according to a colophon, the manuscript was completed in March of 1474 A.D.[20].

[9] Vööbus, «Important Discoveries For the History of Syrian Mysticism».
[10] The church belongs to the Syrian Catholic Church.
[11] The codex comprises 26 kurrāsē with 262 folio pages written in 2 columns.
[12] ܙܘܗܪܐ ܘܡܦܝܣܢܘܬܐ ܥܠ ܐܣܟܡܐ ܕܕܝܪܝܘܬܐ ܘܝܚܝܕܝܘܬܐ.
[13] Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 104; the manuscript was copied in the year 1909 A.D.
[14] Ms. Damascus Patr. 10/3.
[15] Quire 1, fol. 2b - quire 18, fol. 9a.
[16] According to the colophon the codex was copied in the year 1918 by Mattheos bar Paulos.
[17] See Vööbus, *Syriac Manuscripts*.

Our search has been crowned with the discovery of still another writing of Abū Ghalīb. This one comes to us in the form of a letter. The codex which has preserved this unique record also comes from the treasure chamber of the Monastery of Mār Ḥanānyā or Deir Zaʿfarān which has preserved so many invaluable and unique manuscripts which have not survived elsewhere. The codex which has preserved this unique record is Ms. Mardin Orth. 422, a record which comprises a corpus of documents, ascetic and mystical in character[21]. It was here that this writing found its hiding place. It bears the title: «A letter of Athanasios, bishop of Ǧaiḥan on solitariness»[22]. The letter is devoted to the same subject of spirituality and mysticism fostering the ideal form of solitude in the monastic life. The manuscript has preserved a colophon[23] according to which it was copied in the year 1473 A.D.[24], but the text in which we are interested is found in a restored part of the codex and must have been written by a somewhat later hand.

The measure of surprise is not yet full. Our search has revealed still another work which belongs to a different genre, namely, the genre of *mēmrā*. The location of this unique document is the collection of manuscripts located in another famous monastery, Mār Mattai on the mountain near Mosul. The place of hiding — the huge corpus of ascetic and mystical works in Ms. Mār Mattai 27. This codex introduces our source under the title: «Another *mēmrā* in the metre of Mār Jaʿqōb which was composed by Mār Athanasios who is Abū Ghalīb»[25]. This *mēmrā* is consecrated to the subject of inner purity and spirituality in the

[18] ܥܠ ܝܚܝܕܝܘܬܐ.
[19] Quire 34, fol. 6aff.
[20] The codex was completed in the month of Adar in the year 1785 A. Gr. It was written by Rabban Ṣalībā, monk and presbyter and Rabban Gabriel, monk and deacon and Abraham of the village of Bēt Sabīrīnā in the Monastery of Qarṭamīn at the demand of Rabban Jausep, presbyter and monk — a recluse of Arbu Qastra.
[21] See Vööbus, *Syriac Manuscripts*.
[22] Fol. 173aff.
[23] See *ibid.*, page 322.
[24] The manuscript was copied in the Monastery of Ṣalībā, called the Monastery of Banaʾēl.
[25] Fol. 208a-208b.

mystical tradition. The *mēmrā* was sent to monks. This beautifully executed codex has no colophon but on palaeographical grounds it can be assigned to the fifteenth century.

b. *The Author*

It is very gratifying that, with the emergence of these writings, a certain amount of information about the person and life of Abū Ghalīb also has gradually emerged. According to historical notes in connection with his writings, Abū Ghalīb has earned a reputation in the ascetic life and in his treatment of the subject of asceticism and spirituality. He is reported to have lived in the Monastery of Patura which later became known as the Monastery of Abū Ghalīb. According to comments of his own included in his works, he had composed altogether twenty-five works on the subject of monasticism and asceticism — this is stated in the codex in Mosul. According to the historical notes added to these writings in the year 1168/9 A.D., Patriarch Michael consecrated this prolific ascetic author to the episcopal see of Ǧaiḥan under the name of Athanasios. He is reported to have held the episcopal office until his death in the year 1177 A.D. Still more can be learned from these historical notes. It is stated at the end of the main work, which most probably also was the most extensive, that he had composed it in the year 1176/7 A.D.[26]. If so, this work was the last gift he was permitted to give in the furtherance of monasticism.

[26] In the year 1488 A. Gr.

XX. MONASTICISM IN THE LIGHT OF THE LEGISLATIVE SOURCES

1. The Canons of the Monastery of Mār Ḥanānyā

a. *The Sources*

A very unique record, in itself a jewel of great price has been awaiting its turn. It consists of a cycle of monastic canons which unfolds the life in the Monastery of Mār Ḥanānyā. This cycle of canons, indeed, makes an extraordinary contribution to the genre of monastic legislation. Not only were these canons promulgated for a monastery which was one of the most important in the entire maphrianate but also for one which has played a very important role in the whole of West Syrian Christianity. It enriches our store of knowledge greatly inasmuch as it unfolds the life which Jōḥannān created in the monasteries restored by him in the diocese of Mardē. In this respect, the document is singular.

Extraordinarily fortunate circumstances have made it possible for this very precious record to survive. Only a single manuscript has preserved this set of canons and that document is Ms. Damascus Patr. 8/11[1]. Whatever else is now available carries no independent value since that represents no more than copies made from our document by recent hands[2]. The text[3] of this cycle of canons exceeds everything we have seen in legislative materials previously examined. It surpasses every record in this genre.

It is obvious that this collection of canons has generously drawn much from many other legislative records, from sources scrutinized by Jōḥannān in preparating his cycle of canons. It seems clear that there must also have been sources among those so investigated which have since disappeared, having perished due to the vicissitudes of time.

This extensive cycle of canons furthermore has been provided with a commensurate proem. Besides critically important historical data about

[1] Fol. 221b-227a.; the manuscript comes from the year 1024 A. D. However this section has been added later to the codex.
[2] Ms. Mardin Orth. 323, fol. 70a-75a; the manuscript is a modern copy.
[3] *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition* II, ed. Vööbus, p. 217ff.

the activities of Jōḥannān[4], it deals with principles of monastic life. In the discussion of the coenobitic life, obedience to the superior has been put in the first place among the requirements demanded of the adherents. Other requirements involve the submission to poverty[5], the transfer of all possessions to the community[6], ascetic discipline[7], and obligations with regard to fasting and to working with the hands. After this, a more excellent state in monastic life is highlighted: «Another order[8], however, is higher than this — it is that which is called anchoretism[9] when a person secludes himself or wanders among the mountains and caverns and cracks and caves of the earth, seeing and hearing nothing, neither being judged nor judging anybody»[10]. However, such a more excellent state calls for commensurate training: «But if a person wishes to come to that superb road, the road which is very rough, he must at first submit himself for a certain time to general obedience, since for years he must give up all pride through obedience (namely) in the community, humbling himself selflessly to others. And (only) then may he desire the other (road) of perfection which is the cleansing of (his) thoughts»[11].

More important even than these questions which occur in the canons themselves is a section which deals with the election of the superior. Now this is something which does not usually appear in the canons. The procedure to be followed is laid out clearly: «And the election of such a leader must (be done) thusly: when the entire community is assembled they shall remain together with one another for three days. And when they have agreed to designate one, then they shall inform their venerable

[4] See page 390.

[5] «That which a monk must possess in his cell is matting and book and a pot and a leather mat to be stretched out under him».

[6] «They possess nothing for themselves but all that they have must be common according to the apostolic commandments».

[7] They must eat dry bread as is the custom of the Egyptian fathers».

[8] τάξις.

[9] [illegible].

[10] [illegible], *The Synodicon* II, p. $213_{24\text{-}27}$.

[11] [illegible], *ibid.*, p. 213_{24}-214_{1}.

one so that if it is proper that this certain person may become the leader over them, he may then permit it to them. And if he knows that he is suitable and right he may then permit it to them. And so then with that positive permission and with full agreement, they may appoint him (their) leader bringing him before the throne of the great altar»[12].

b. *The Canons*

The first canon. The abbot shall be a lover of men, long-suffering, patient; he shall be ready to bear (much); (to show) that he has no fervor of indignation against careless brothers; kind to everyone, one who does not retain wrath over anybody; compassionate over the workers of the community and the brother-monks, having no injustice in him.

He, however, shall act justly and shall teach (through) example and give a good model to those guided by him, watching and keeping his ship so that it will not be swallowed up by waves of confusion due to the lack of order.

He shall be skilfully versed in the orders of the church and the import of the apostolic canons so that they shall not be trodden underfoot by the brothers.

Just as there must be a balance of elements[1] in a body, so when among the elements there is neither super-abundance nor deficiency, then there is in the body the perfect health of the body. Health establishes the body, (but) sickness is superfluidity or deficiency of the physical hyle[2] which generates trouble and this trouble is sickness. Good order[3] as well as the ecclesiastical canon is a preserver of health. So then it is required of the abbot of the monastery to love these canons which have been established by us, the weak ones, for the building up of this ecclesiastical establishment more than his own life, keeping them and taking them as his own.

The second canon. However, with the abbot there shall be two other persons or three faithful *parnāsē*[4] — tested monks (to give) assistance.

[12] «(Then) they (shall call) on God as witness and on his chosen angels and the twelve thousand saints whose bones are hidden in the monastery, and the venerable prophets and the divine apostles and the orthodox teachers and the holy fathers and the whole *qeyāmā* of the holy church and the entire Old and New Testament. And they shall ask him to profess that if he commits any evil action and (acts) unjustly then all these witnesses shall in truth judge him on (that) day when nothing will profit him but his deeds», *ibid.*, p. $216_{25\text{-}32}$.

[1] στοιχεῖον.

[2] ὕλη.

[3] τάξις.

[4] [illegible], «stewards», «administrators».

Their election shall be (such) that they shall be with the abbot (just) mentioned. And they shall be his hand and feet and eyes and his tongue. Without them he shall do nothing either little or great. From this it is evident — although he is the rightful head — that he shall do nothing at all without the counsel of the faithful stewards from the tested monks as has been mentioned. Therefore they shall be servants before him and are to do everything that he orders them except that which they cannot rightly do.

They are to write the entire account of the income and expense for him, thoroughly and carefully, so that there shall be about him no place for a murmuring word from clutching brothers who wish to look for scandal.

They shall write down the income in this way: every month so and so, so much through my hand, so and so, we have entered *zūzē* or given out. And another book (must be used) for the expense in the month, so and so, in like manner: for so and so something, also through my hand so and so. They shall write on all the affairs of the community and of the church and they shall be handed over (to the abbot).

And no one shall resist the commandment of the abbot. The one who resists when he orders him, should he truly have no cause of necessity[5] or sickness or something else, he shall be separated from the table of the brothers. But they shall have a share and fellowship with those who are praying. Like the soldier who is mentioned by the ancients, when he heard that war was to begin between two sides, he orders himself to be brought in on a bier[6]; when he is to be questioned by the brothers, he is to answer that which is worthy to be written down: if there is victory I have a share in it with you, but if there is defeat — is my ownself better than yours? You, disciple, are a soldier for that one who sees secrets — (there) be not slothful and slow. How can you leave your brothers (thus) losing your life? (In this way) your sins will be doubled. But you have to act manfully and confront the sloth and depression — and it will flee speedily from you.

He who is not prepared to come to prayer is not allowed by God to eat (anything) except dry bread for two days.

The third canon. When you pray the prayer of compline, you shall do it together with one another with many genuflections[7], i.e. kneelings.

[5] ἀνάγκη.
[6] This is how the text reads; it seems that something is not in order with the text.
[7] μετάνοια.

You (must) ask forgiveness from one another, as those who do not know when the departure on a bed in the sleep of the night may happen; be prepared — if there may have happened any transgression to any one of you, whether knowingly or unknowlingly — so that (at the time of) sunset, wrath shall also pass away or go down through the rise of love.

Further in this place a proposed form of confession shall be set for you. Everyone shall say to his companions: «Forgive me all in that I have sinned against you either willingly or unwillingly, secretly or openly, the grudge, hatred, evil, coveteousness, falsehood, backbiting, every sin». At the end, The presbyters, i.e. the priests, shall say: «Amen». Or he who is charged with the conclusion[8] shall sign them.

However, the sacristan[9] should not tarry unduly, he shall strike a *maqōšā* for compline.

The fourth canon. From the *Tešrī ḥrayā*[10] the lessons shall be portions of (sacred) books. (There shall be) two selected lections, prophetic and apostolic, administered by groups; that is to say from the consecration of the church until the great Sunday of the Resurrection, reading continually lessons of the Old and New (Testaments) by groups, and on all dominical feasts and the commemoration of the martyrs, etc.

(There is also to be read) the *mēmrē* and *tūrgāmē* of the doctors during the evenings preceding the Sundays.

And on the dominical feasts and on the commemoration of the martyrs there shall be (lessons) once or twice every night.

And eight psalms, *marmyān*[11], every night until the great feasts of the Resurrection according to the order[12] of the tradition in the church of the Syrians in 'Ūrhāi and the west.

Also the stories of the fathers and readings suitable for the life of monasticism, and those which are known and in every way profitable also for the edification of the community of this divine monastery.

The fifth canon. A fixed daily fasting shall be (established) for this monastery from *Tešrī qadīm*[13] to the great feast of the Resurrection. And this shall be until the ninth hour.

During the great fast of the forty (days) until the evening.

[8] Or: «with the final prayer».
[9] Derived from κόνχη.
[10] The month of November.
[11] ܡܪ̈ܡܝܢ subdivisions of the Psalter.
[12] τάξις.
[13] The month of October.

From the great feast of the Resurrection and later (too) — when there is (the time for) work until the third hour or until midday — and (then) fasting.

Those who abide continually in the monastery shall fast until the ninth hour.

For a monk, fastings and prayers are provisions for the road of asceticism[14]; these are his constant occupation. When he fasts perfectly and increasingly, (so) he shall also become diligent that he shall fast in his inner self so that his discipleship shall not go to waste.

The sixth canon. The sacristan[15] shall instruct the presbyters so that they will set up the (liturgical) *sedrā*[16] and offer the sacrifices or pray or read the *mēmrē* and *tūrgāme*, etc. And he shall make them known the offering from the morning of the day.

The seventh canon. The fixed and determined fasts of the *ṭūrāšā*[17] after the great fast of the forty days: the fast of the apostles after the Sunday of Pentecost[18] — for fifty days; the fast of the Assumption of the Godbearer in the beginning of *'Āb*[19], fifteen days; the fast of the Cross, eight days; the fast of the adorable Nativity, forty days; the fast of Ninive, five days.

(All) these are (obligatory) for the monks, the presbyters, the deacons and the believers.

Monks shall not make for themselves food and drink on Sunday nor on the feasts, concluding the fast of the apostles as is the negligent custom of a few who break the (rule on) *ṭūrāšā* on Saturday and Sunday, the holy fast of the apostles which is after the Pentecost.

The eighth canon. Those who are in Christ are new creatures[20]; thus, they shall not be like (those) who are separate from each other, as we have said, like the worldly people (who have) companions (who are) strangers and neighbors (who are) aliens, but that all of you shall equally be in the manner of the inner part of the body, so that each member has his special service[21].

14 ܕܘܒܪܬܐ.
15 κόνχη.
16 ܣܕܪܐ «order», «liturgical chants», «prayers».
17 ܛܘܪܫܐ food which was forbidden during a fast.
18 πεντεκοστή.
19 The month of August.
20 II Cor. V, 17.
21 Cf. Rom. XII, 4ff.

One, indeed, is the head in which the mind dwells as a king and through which it directs everything in the entire body; also there is the eye which sees for the entire body, and there is the hand doing service for all (of the body); another (member) is the ear, another the foot, carrying the whole (body). The Apostle speaks at length (about) all of these, these (parts) which are necessary for us in order that certain people will not prepare themselves for a quarrel against the one who stands at the head, whether the abbot or the chief[22] or the brothers or the stewards[23], and that men shall not so align themselves to one another and say: we will not do this or that (and) in order that they will not become guilty with one another.

We say: not (at all) but that love shall be poured out upon every man. If one loves the person who obeys him but constrains the community, that is not love but the pain (of passion) from which in due season confusion in the community will be begotten. He, however, who is in subjection to the community — (for him) no quarrel has the power to become (a matter) of opposition to the canon of the community. If anybody is not so (subject), he becomes a destroyer of peace and of the rule[24] of the community. (Neither) shall such a one (be allowed to desist or depart away) wherever (he wants); he expels himself from the body of Christ through the arrogance of wanting to set up a faction. Christ, however, gives the beatitude to the humble ones[25].

All together we decree that no one shall be responsible for everyone but for himself yet he may intercede[26] (for others) humbly in gentleness.

The ninth canon. If one shall make for himself garden plots[27] for sowing or some other pursuit, his necessities are to be supplied by the community, i.e., moderate clothing, sandals or food. But when a person has a vineyard or something else and does not wish to enjoy with pleasure the sweetness of freedom, free from care, this one shall give it over to the laborers and from that which remains of it, he shall manage with the fear of God, selling that which comes from the wine press as (he did) before.

22 ܪܝܫ ܕܝܪܐ.
23 ܦܪܢܣܐ.
24 κανών.
25 Cf. Matth. V, 5.
26 πεῖσαι.
27 The vocable ܫܟܪܬܐ is Arabic شكارة.

(This is) the case so long as he has this evil sickness. The true disciples of Christ, who trust in no other hope are especially those (who are) in the community (of monks).

The tenth canon. The abbot or steward or chief of the brothers shall assign to the brothers in the fear of God the labor[28] of the community.

The monks shall be prepared to obey without dispute. He who objects and does not obey shall be expelled without further ado.

The eleventh canon. He who takes something from the community furtively or from another place, it shall be forgiven him once; for the rest he shall pay fourfold. If he again dares to do this, he shall be expelled without further ado.

Canon 12. It is necessary for the monks of this monastery to do manual work without the monastery so that they do not become inclined to a depression of the mind. Idleness begets harm for the monks.

All the monks shall continue in the reading of ecclesiastical books.

He who possesses knowledge shall teach the rest of the brothers.

He who does not possess knowledge and the paternal Syriac language, he shall learn not to esteem it basely nor shall he be lazy as (are the) stagnant ones, the stupid, who love not knowledge but (only) the adoration of empty and idle words of no profit and who in idleness become like a tree which has no fruit[29].

And the rest of the clergymen[30], dwellers of the monastery, shall learn the sweet songs, the manner of speech such as antiphons (doctrinal hymns), litanies, the Greek canons and the rest of our western melodies just (as do) the people of ʾŪrhāi with their sweet melodies.

Canon 13. A monk who raises his voice and cries out about something, that one does not stand in the order[31] of the discipline; this is not (even) the custom according to the worldly norm. He who raises and lifts up his voice and chatters (tales within the monastery) or outside or breaks out in loud laughter or laughs about a defect that his brother has, he shall lead the life of abstinence — in the evening fasting on dry bread for one week, doing repentance and asking forgiveness from the (most) revered, aged one of confession in the monastery.

[28] The vocable ܫܘܓܠܐ is an Arabic word شواغل; cf. BAR BAHLUL, *Lexicon syriacum*, col. 1940.

[29] Cf. Luke XIII, 6ff.; Matth. Vii, 19.

[30] κληρικός.

[31] τάξις.

Canon 14. The order (of the behavior), of the monks is: a peaceful walk, a chaste look that is bent down continually together with his head; peaceful and quiet talk, an affectionate (way of) questioning and a peaceful and affectionate answer and love towards men for all the brothers.

Canon 15. Monks shall not sit on the porches[32] and narrate over much as (do) the seculars who do not fear God.

The monks, moreover, shall work either in the monastery with their hands occupying themselves with God in their mind or they shall read the sacred scriptures; or they shall sit with somebody who reads the scriptures; or they shall recite a psalm by heart; or they shall sit inside the walls of their cells[33] waiting for their Lord who may call at an hour which they do not know, according to that which is said in the adorable gospel[34].

If one of the brothers of the monastery shall be stricken by illness and he has no brother, (and) a helper to serve him until be becomes well (is required), the abbot and the managers shall appoint one person from the monks unto him. This (is to be one) in order that one shall serve him as long as he is sick; (also) so that — if he has nothing — the needs[35] of him are fulfilled by the community.

If, however, there appear in him signs of departure, he shall call his father of repentance and confession and he shall confess to him everything in which he has transgressed and which he has done whether in deed, by thought or word. Then (the father confessor) shall ask him just as our Lord (did) with those who were sick or needed healing: «Do you believe that I can forgive you these which you have confessed to me?» He shall say: «I truly believe that you have been given the authority to forgive the sins of those who in faith desire forgiveness». Then shall he answer and say: «In the true faith and love of Christ, he who promised and gave the authority and said: «When you forgive the faults and sins of one they are forgiven to him[36], do thou our Lord forgive him everything in which he has sinned and make him worthy for the lot and portion of thy saints through thy mercy. Amen».

When if possible all the presbyters and brothers of the place are

[32] Or: «thresholds».

[33] κέλλια.

[34] εὐαγγέλιον.

[35] ἀνάγκη.

[36] Cf. Matth. VI, 14.

assembled, he shall give an order regarding the one who is departing to distribute (his possessions) should he possess anything which yet remains to him. It is fair and true and just and right that this true disciple of Christ shall not possess anything, as one who is prepared to depart, except those (things) for his necessity about which I am speaking, (namely) the (monk's) habit[37] and the book. These (things) shall be for the community.

And all the members of the monastery shall make for him who died three vigils especially and particularly.

Instead of one *būšālā*[38] there shall be prepared two for every vigil.

Canon 16. It is right, however, that once in every completed year the presbyters of this monastery shall commemorate especially and particularly that one who died, at the last (prayer) of (inclining)[39], during the offering in the house of the departed, saying: «Remember thy servant so and so who departed from us and all those who have passed away from this community».

Canon 17. As a warning to you, o members of the community, I command that you, with great care (and) without fail every day keep remembrance at the altars for Ḥanānyā, the first bishop of this monastery, in the (same) manner as the holy apostles and fathers, when you call to remembrance the apostles and bishops; and (also) for those who have labored in this monastery; and for everyone who has taken pains and toiled either by a gift or by construction or by vows or by the tenth or by having taken pains and become wearied from labor — from this time forward.

It shall be an everlasting law[40] without interruption forever in this monastery. He who thinks to alter (it) by a stratagem[41] or by diabolical machinations, or to abrogate and to mar the ordinance of the canons, those suitable and fixed which we have ordered[42] for this monastery which we shall call in memory or which we will mention below, (also) other canons which we shall arrange for the synod at which we will gather — if the Lord wishes, that he will give us his hand in assistance — he who alters these canons and abrogates them, shall have no part whether in the (eucharistic) oblations or in the pure prayers.

[37] σχῆμα.
[38] ܒܘܫܠܐ boiled or cooked food.
[39] A prayer said by a priest with bent head and low voice, i.e. oratio secreta.
[40] νόμος.
[41] πόρος.
[42] τάσσειν.

Or if anybody causes any of the monks in any way to annul this order which we have established by all these (rulings), completely necessary according to the law and canon of the convents and monasteries of our *benai qeyāmā* in the western settlements in the church of our blessed Jacobites in all our monasteries — he who thinks to alter it shall be counted with the destroyers of the law of God and he shall be numbered with the crucifiers of Christ and not be pardoned in this world nor in that to come but remain under the excommunications and curses until forever.

Canon 18. To all of you, presbyters and brothers, I say: You shall be helpers (in fulfilling) the precept of the abbot. He who resists shall be thrown out.

It is right for the abbot to do everything that he does in righteousness and uprightness. It is not right for him to do anything by prejudice whether to cast out or to expel any monk from the monastery without (the agreement) of) the stewards[43].

He shall not have wrath or hatred towards anyone nor shall he do anything outside of righteousness nor, especially, to take advantage of anyone.

He who is weak through old age or sickness shall be borne by you when, for necessary[44] cause, it calls for action on the part of the community.

Canon 19. A warning from us, the weak ones, regarding the despondency of the *šabtāyē*[45], those who complain about (their) labor and the burden of the office of the *šabtāyā* and the community and (also) the murmuring of the negligent brothers — all such! Would that you had an eye on the vision of things in secret and could appreciate the spiritual and divine service which you had ministered; also, would that you had known who (it is that) you were serving and who is first in this service. However, it is not necessary to prolong this for we are not writing a homily to you. We are establishing a word of compulsory regulations. Nothing in these shall be passed over at all.

We, however, are succinctly calling to your mind the profit which comes from this service. Look you, to whom this service of life is so difficult. Let your mind take flight and see our father Abraham, the

[43] ܦܪܢܣܐ.
[44] ἀνάγκη.
[45] ܫܒܬܝܐ hebdomadaries.

father of the nations, the old one, laden (in years) of an age profound, concerning whom, praying, we say in our supplication and at the conclusion[46] of our prayers: «O Lord God, make us and the departed ones worthy of the light in the bosom of Abraham» — regarding whom God is called his God although He is God of the entire creation. He is the earthly counselor and an angel in the flesh.

What was this chief of the divine fathers doing, or the divine prophet Moses, that you should in such a way celebrate him? Moses answered and said: «Abraham was sitting in the tent and gazing with his eyes, looking for a traveller as was his habit sitting at the crossroads in order not to miss an opportunity for profit. And as the sun grew hot, he saw three men in front of him. And he hurried to Sarah and she prepared the table»[47]. And the Trinity entered his house and blessed him. In the same way the hebdomadaries of whom we have spoken, are set up to (serve) at tables hoping to serve the sanctuary in honor because our Lifegiver said in his gospel: «I was hungry and you fed me»[48].

Canon 21. Brothers and all who sit at the table in the community — it is not right for you to choose the places but everyone shall know his order. If he wishes to be brought down, that is up to him.

Canon 22. No one shall sit at a separate (place) away from the table of the community. If he sits outside, they shall give him no food except for him who has come from the road or who is ill or if abstinent[49] does not eat *būšālā*.

In like manner is no one allowed to take some food to another cell[50]; also not to the wayfarers, for he who is a wayfarer must come and eat in the community.

He who transgresses these (regulations) shall be condemned. If he shall do this evil one time or two, it shall be forgiven to him. If more, the canon shall be imposed according to the will of the abbot, and he shall respond in appropriate fashion or he shall be thrown out without further ado.

Canon 23. The regulations of the prayers.

There are seven (prayers) for you according to (the practice of) the convents and monasteries, i.e., in the evening — which is of the lamp,

[46] Or: «final benediction».
[47] Gen. XVIII, 1ff.
[48] Matth. XXV, 35.
[49] Or: «ascetic».
[50] κελλίον.

that is compline, and in the middle of the night, and the rest of the nightly and daily times of prayers.

He who grows weary and is not prepared (to be present) from the beginning of the prayers but is (residing) in the monastery and is not sick in his illness so as to be unable to stand up, yet cannot sit (with the brothers), he shall serve his prayer in his cell.

Because he is weak in sickness he may drink three cups of wine in a day. If he again gets well — a monk may drink up to three cups.

Canon 24. One dinar must be taken from a monk who strikes his companion — if he has anything.

If he has nothing, he shall fast for three months without the *ṭūrāšā* and shall eat dry bread.

Canon 25. A monk who fights with a companion (perhaps) calling him by (some) name[51], is disdainful of him and causes him to reply to him and they go from this into fighting — it shall be forgiven him one time or two.

If they hurt (one another), it shall be changed into a fast of one month, ascetically without any *ṭūrāšā*. Particularly if he raises his hand to beat his companion.

Canon 26. A monk is not allowed to go alone into the town or village and to spend the night there.

If there is an urgent cause, then two shall go together yet this (only) if there is a manner of urgency in the work of the monastery.

If one goes to a place without the order of the abbot — the doorkeeper shall not let him enter the monastery until he accepts unto himself the fast for (the period of) one month.

Canon 27. Whoever has urgent cause shall tell the abbot and if the abbot permits him (to do so) he may do it. The abbot, however, shall not command anything which goes beyond that which has been determined by the canon.

If he breaks and transgresses the canons in a decisive manner, for each canon which he breaks the abbot shall fast one fast until he is amended (in his ways) by having observed them.

Canon 28. Any monk when the *naqōšā* is struck who does not come hastening to the prayer in the church shall be admonished one time, two and three (times). And if he has not amended (his ways), he shall be

[51] Lit.: «nickname».

separated from the table until he confesses and repents — that he will not do this (again).

Canon 29. It is right that the deacons of the monastery shall have a chief[52]. He shall instruct those who are under him. He whom he instructs to serve and who does not obey and who has no necessary causes shall cease from his service; he shall eat dry bread until he has amended (his attitude). If he will not be amended, he shall cease completely from the service.

Canon 30. A monk shall not mar the order of the church[53].

He who does not know the psalms and ceases from the recitation shall not eat the *ṭūrāšā* so long as he is idle.

The thirtieth (canon). A monk who eats before the offering[54] and before he receives a blessing[55], except there be a cause of sickness or necessity[56], shall fast one week ascetically without the *ṭūrāšā*.

The thirty-first (canon). A monk who brings out the secrets of the monastery or any talk of the transgression[57] of the brothers or about the fightings and quarrels of the brothers or who appeals to the seculars about these canons which we have ordered[58] for this monastery or who goes to an authority in a lawsuit in which he is involved or (engages) in a fight with another monk or who abandons the judgement of the church and also these canons, etc., even though he has someone who can give judgements (in his case) — such a man shall be excommunicated and cut off from the messianic body of Christ, entirely from Christianity and also from the mysteries of the church completely. And he shall in no way be accepted in this monastery if it can truly be witnessed against him that he has committed one of these evils or calumniation, an accusation before the rulers and officials and judges and leaders of the country, etc. And the more so, if he goes and seeks support from the foreigners against the monastery and these monks wathever the case might be. Such a one we do not accept as a Christian and believer in Christ, and we (hold) as an unfrocked one and as an accursed one and as a stranger and a despised

52 ܪܫܐ.

53 Structurally this clause belongs to the preceding canon.

54 ܩܘܪܒܐ celebration of the eucharist.

55 ܒܘܪܟܬܐ a «blessing», «benediction», «eulogia».

56 ἀνάγκη.

57 The text reads erroneously ܡܥܒܢܘܬܐ but the correct word should be ܡܥܒܪܘܬܐ.

58 τάσσειν.

one any person who commits the evils we mentioned, whoever commits this offence and becomes a stumbling block to all members of this sacerdotal monastery, whichever man goes and creates strife and offense against the monks and laymen.

We have written to you on these matters in order that they may become guardians against evil things and harms and injuries. You, the members of the monastery, are living in this divine monastery of the chosen and God-clothed Mār Ḥanānyā, like a second Christ, and with him twelve thousand saints whose Shechinah[59] and power are in this monastery, who are to you like fortified fortresses and the strong walls of a city, and like fences of a vineyard and like a remedy and medicine to sick people and like some bitter roots which drive away all injury, like medicine which cures the pain of the soul and body of any person who seeks healing. They increase love, chase away troubles; they remove the stumbling block from the road of truth, they cause satisfaction to him who desires good things and they increase the good fruits of our obedience.

I, Jōḥannān, old and feeble, by name a bishop, have ordered and set up and confirmed the content[60] of the above canons. Whoever resists them and does not obey them shall not be pardoned by God, neither in this world nor in the one to come.

2. The Canons for the Monasteries of Mār ʾAbai and of Mār Ḥanānyā

From the canons set up by Jōḥannān of Mardē, another set of canons has come down to us. This is much shorter and quite different in its character. Historically, this document is important since it unfolds a new aspect in the restoration work of the monasteries carried out by Jōḥannān of Mardē[1]. These canons have the purpose of strengthening the existence of the restored monasteries in a way very different from those which have been already discussed. For this purpose, Jōḥannān used the method of cooperation.

This document has been preserved in a unique manuscript, Ms.

59 ܡܫܟܢܬܐ «tabernacle», «shrine» and the Shechinah in Neo-Hebrew.

60 Lit.: «body».

1 See page 392ff.

Damascus Patr. 8/11[2], which is a very rare historical record since it has preserved the Synodicon in the West Syrian tradition[3].

The text of this document has been edited[4].

The monasteries which were chosen for such cooperation were the Monastery[5] of Mār ʾAbai[6] and the Monastery of Mār Ḥanānyā[7].

The text of this very extraordinary source reads as follows: I, the old and weak Jōḥannān, bishop, corporeally the son of parents from ʾŪrhāi[8], do hereby confirm that I myself composed[9] this definite[10] and firm commandment.

I am firm in myself and think that this blessed monastery of the holy martyr Mār ʾAbai in the village of Qillet which is near the town of Ṣūrā[11] — (that) this Monastery of Mār ʾAbai should be together (i.e. act in cooperation) with the Monastery of Mār Ḥanānyā.

Anything that is left over of the crop and other things and of produce and of the harvest and of fruits, shall be used to fill the needs of the place and of its brothers — that the remainder shall be brought to this said monastery.

And (also) when the Monastery of Mār ʾAbai is in need, then they from Mār Ḥanānyā shall bring (enough) to fill its need.

The monks shall take due care and exercise diligence over the

[2] Fol. 215a. The same text appears in Ms. Mardin Orth. 323, fol. 80a-81a.

[3] *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition* II, ed. VÖÖBUS, p. 230f.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 230f.

[5] The Monastery of Mār ʾAbai was an ancient establishment, see VÖÖBUS, *History of Asceticism* II, p. 230. The vita of Šemūʾēl claims to have information about its origin. It is told here that in his earlier career Šemūʾēl, the founder of the Monastery of Qarṭamīn, established this monastery, and «they call it Mār ʾAbai until this day», Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 17,265, fol. 9b. A new witness comes in Ms. Istanbul Meryemana 4, fol. 81a. The monastery was restored by Jōḥannān of Mardē, see page 399f.

[6] In connection with the history of the Monastery of Mār ʾAbai a fact should be mentioned here, namely that Bishop Mār Theodoṭā of Amid left here his «Testament». It seems that this was a set of ordinances for the life of the monastery community or regulations for the administration of the monastery. This record existed in a manuscript which was in possession of Tūma Baṣaranlar in Diyarbakir. It is a matter of regret that this precious codex is not available since it has been sold, as I was told. According to the notes on this codex it contained an extensive collection of biographical and legislative records, including a number of totally unknown documents. Here the «testament» appeared as nr. 40: ܐܡܕ ܕܡܪܝ ܬܐܘܕܘܛܐ ܕܒܝܬ ܐܒܐ ܡܪܝ ܕܥܒܕ ܕܕܝܬܝܩܝ.

[7] See page 392ff.

[8] The text reads «ʾUrhāyē».

[9] Lit.: «made».

[10] Lit,: «fixed».

[11] Ṣūrā was in the Qōrōs mountains in the western part of Ṭūr ʿAbdīn.

monastery inasmuch as this Monastery of Mār Ḥanānyā is the seat of the patriarchate for all the western and eastern Jacobites[12].

The same custom is (followed) in the glorious eastern Monastery of Mār Mattai[13], that old (institution), divine, holy and glorious in excellence where there are three monasteries united with regard to income and expense.

And whoever is elected by the body (of the community) is to go there and take with him brothers, companions as an escort for him.

And he is to stay there one year and be diligent and dwell in the place.

And of that which is left over (there), he is to bring (back what is needed) for the sustenance of this brotherhood.

The reason is (this) that this monastery is the greatest among all the convents and monasteries for us, just as the Monastery of Mār Mattai is the greatest in all the land of Nineve and the east, and rules over all the eastern monasteries. And of that which they leave over in them, the monks shall bring to Mār Mattai.

[12] The text reads «Syrians», also in Ms. Mardin Orth. 323; it is obvious that originally the text read «Jacobites» and this has been changed.

[13] About the Monastery of Mār Mattai, see page 255f. Regarding the traditions of the monastery new sources have emerged in Ms. Mār Mattai 193, fol. 81a-107a, 107b-129a; Ms. Mosul Orth. 182, fol. 47a-54a, and Ms. Šarfeh Patr. 247, fol. 46b-61b.

XXI. THE IMPACT OF MONASTICISM UPON THE MUSLIM ARABS

1. The Radiation of a Spirit of Humaneness and of Eleemosynary Concern

Of deeper thoughts and feelings of compassion and charity, Islam contained only a few features, features whose origins go back to the Medina period of the prophet. The Quran too contains no more than a few references. All in all, a less than adequate resource for the Arabs to use in conquered areas. The sons of the desert, with phenomenal successes of conquest behind them, were not disposed to pursue life inspired by nobler thoughts nor to cultivate trends generated by deeper motivations. The cultural niveau of the occupiers of the newly conquered territories was low, corresponding in no way to the level of achievement reached on the military side. Indeed, early Islamic poets paint a realistic picture of the actual state of affairs; on their view of it, a morally higher plane could only be attained if two basic evils were to be overcome — one, the licentious behavior of the occupiers in the new regions and two, the enmity which had poisoned relations between the tribes themselves, an enmity which threatened their very existence. In the face of such circumstances, the developement of deeper thought and of a spirit of human warmth would have to await better times.

Surprisingly, however, the emergence of works of charity and of institutions devoted to eleemosynary care — such as xenodochia, hospitals and similar institutions — occurred much sooner than one would have expected. According to the tradition, the first individual to see to the erection of a xenodochion and hospital was the Caliph al-Walīd at the beginning of the eighth century. Among his successors, too, there were others who were to win fame and reputation for activities of a similar kind, among whom al-Mahdi in particular is to be mentioned. He founded a number of places for the dispensation of charity. In addition to the xenodochia and hospitals, other charitable arrangements were gradually implemented — kitchens for the poor, asyla for orphans and establishments for the infirm.

The sources leave us with the impression that the period between the

initial stage as it is unfolded in the Quran and all of the establishments which reveal a deeper humane spirit and a charitable attitude in the spiritual-cultural life of Syria and Mesopotamia — a period allowing for development to a higher level — was too short. Even when one takes all factors in the prevailing situation into account, it would appear that some other factor had to be involved. Since the Arabs, in other areas involving culturo-spiritual values, learned from the values of the subjugated population in Syria, Mesopotamia and Persia, the question arises whether their mental attitude and more profound sentiment was influenced and enriched in a similar way.

We need, first of all, to reckon with the spontaneous radiation of spiritual forces which confronted the sons of the desert, rough and primitive as they were, with an atmosphere in Syria, Mesopotamia and Persia, insofar as charitable work and human compassion are concerned, quite different from any they had known. The spirit of Mitleid and of human warmth which was to move them was animated by the ascetics and anchorites[1]; it was displayed on a broad scale by monastic communities which found themselves in an excellent position to give such a disposition credence, thus to allow their eleemosynary activities to become popular[2]. The deeds carried out by the monks on behalf of men and women spoke far more loudly than speech. Certain monasteries made the dissemination of this spirit a sacred duty and thereby even won a certain renown. Many an ordinary Arab utilized the opportunity to appear at the gates of monasteries seeking food, drink or relief from one need or another. Indeed, so many did so that there can scarcely have been any Arabs who did not know about these places of compassion.

Even the simplest deeds manifesting the warmth of the human heart were able to arouse deeper feelings at least in some of the sons of the desert, awakening hidden forces of humanity in them. Deeds of charitable kindness, in particular the cultivation of hospitality which countless Arabs came to enjoy, not only excited curiosity but also more serious reflection among many Arabs, the kind of reflection which led them away from a haughty self-consciousness toward a respect for the simple men in plain garment and their deeds, endowed with heart-

[1] Vööbus, *Einiges über die karitative Tätigkeit des syrischen Mönchtums*, p. 1ff.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 18ff.; Id., *History of Asceticism* II, p. 361ff.

warming gifts. Many Arabs on the delicate question of human values learned from the living examples before their eyes. Indeed, although Arabs were rather testy on these matters, and did not really want to admit that they had borrowed from others, they did occasionally have to admit that incentives had come from the cultural context around them. We are told how caliphs had their attention directed to the duty of charity by Christians, to the imperative of feeding the poor and destitute sitting on the bridges of Baghdad[3].

Another channel should also be taken into account. This involved occurrences which took place during and after the Islamic invasion. Considerable segments of the Syrian communities embraced Islam if the complaints of their spiritual shepherds may be taken at face value.

Since it is difficult to assume that whatever contingents went over to Islam did so without contributing anything to Islam, it is safe to reckon with the fact that a certain new ferment was engendered by them in the Islamic communities in the regions where they lived.

Other avenues also come into account with regard to the evolution of a charitable spirit among the Arabs. The role of Arabs Christians must surely have been of some significance. We are told that the tribe of Taghlib in comparison with other Arab tribes excelled them all in its devotion to works of charity[4]. Some tribes became more open in this respect. It is to be noted that masses of these Arabs in Syria, Mesopotamia and Persia embraced Islam soon after the conquest, whether by voluntary acquiescence on the basis of various sentiments or involuntarily under threat of repression.

However that may have been, the resultant impact was strong enough to foster a trend toward thoughts and feelings of a more profound sort in Islam. Sagig Balchi along with others could testify that nothing suited him more than the presence of a guest, a statement which underlines the importance given to service to travellers[5]. Among such duties as those of helping the poor, the suffering, the destitute and the slaves, this service to travellers was regarded as a service of especial significance. It was men such as these, dressed in the Ṣūfī monastic garments who were able to attain a higher lever of concern for needy fellow human beings, a disposition inspired by a warmth of heart.

[3] AL-ǦAHŠIYĀRĪ, *Kita'b al-wu'za'ra'*.
[4] AL-AKHTAL, *Dīwān*, ed. SALHANI.
[5] He died in 194 H.

Yet still more can be elicited. The above-mentioned trend even developed into a monastic movement in Islam when the Ṣūfī communities came into existence. In this connection, it should be added that the older type of Ṣūfism was more practically than speculatively oriented and possessed a better understanding of practical virtues. It was natural, when they did begin to organize their activities, for them to have kept an eye upon the various practices in the Syrian monasteries. This can scarcely be considered surprising; it would on the face of it have been the most natural thing to have done.

To just what an extent the monastic communities of the Ṣūfīs followed the pattern of the Syrian monastic communities is demonstrated in a source, a work produced by Ibn Baṭṭūṭāh[6], whose testimony leaves nothing to be desired. We have to prepare ourselves for the testimony of a very precious document.

Ibn Baṭṭūṭāh tells us that Ṣūfī monasteries were built in order to assist travellers. He found them at every station. They were staffed by Ṣūfī monks who had devoted themselves entirely to this service. His report introduces a large number of such monasteries in Syria, Mesopotamia and Persia. They had become centers where Ṣūfī monks served travellers and fed them. His report thus allows us an insight into the number of these institutions and the traditions developed in them. We are privileged to observe travellers arriving and how they were received — the chef came forward to give every one two round breads, some meat and sugar. This was the custom. Care was also taken of their animals. Of the monastery in Kazarum, located at the tomb of Abū Iṣhāq, Ibn Baṭṭūṭāh writes that the Ṣūfī monks did not let travellers depart before they had been fed for three days — a familiar tradition in the monasteries of the Syrians[7]. Thus alongisde ascetic and cultic practices, the work and activity was focussed upon the service offered to travellers.

Of the monastery in Toster, we are told that there were four offices in that community: one which had jurisdiction over the gifts, another over the handling of daily expenses, a third the duty of serving the meals and the last responsible for the preparation of the food in the kitchen[8].

In addition to serving travellers, these monasteries also received the

[6] Note from the Editor: Under the circumstances. the detailed evidence from Ibn Baṭṭūṭā's *Riḥla* could not be supplied.
[7] VÖÖBUS, *Einiges über die karitative Tätigkeit*, p. 18ff.; cf. ID., *History of Asceticism* II, p. 361ff.
[8] This service compelled them to collect gifts every day from the people.

poor. We are told that each of the monasteries in Persia, over and above other offices, had an office assigned to the care of the poor.

Travellers, the poor and also others received food free; that service was held to be a sacred duty by the Ṣūfī. Accordingly, these Ṣūfī communities had to find the funds and supplies to provide that service. The ways in which they did so were various. In some of the monasteries, the Ṣūfī monks themselves had to find the resources to fulfil these obligations; in others, income as a consequence of religious vows was used as the source of income; in still other communities, pious sheikhs were persuaded to underwrite such expenses. Ibn Baṭṭūṭāh tells us about one monastery in which Ṣūfī monks were enabled to carry out their work of charity without financial worries because a pious sultan, impressed by their eleemosynary activity and by their ascetic way of life, decided to pay off any debts incurred.

Unfolded before our eyes is an interesting phenomenon in spiritual-cultural history: that of a portion of the conquering forces being inwardly conquered in turn. Syrian monasticism at its best was powerful enough to transmit its compassionate spirit to them. And when the catastrophes of history shrank the numbers of the bearers of this noble spirit to the point where they disappear from the pages of history, the best of their spiritual legacy was able to live on even though the deeds of compassion were then done not in the name of Christ but of Allah.

2. In the Realm of Intellectual Culture via the Graeco-Syro Translation Literature

a. *Bilingual Monasteries*

Over and above ascetic-religious and social concerns, Syrian monasteries performed still another function — a cultural one. It was very important. When we keep in mind the fact that almost all of the Syrian authors were monks or had training in the monasteries, the importance of the function cannot be exaggerated.

The subject under discussion makes it necessary to single out just one aspect in particular in this rich cultural tapestry — the strand having to do with the work of translating Greek literature. This sector is of such a magnitude that it needs to be placed into a much wider culturo-historical perspective. We need, therefore, to make some preliminary observations

on the manner by which the Syrians equipped themselves to make that contribution.

Relations whith Greek culture reach back into the earliest times in the history of Syrian monasteries. This reality is bound up with a remarkable phenomenon of Syrian monasticism, namely, the functioning of monasteries at an international level. That seems to have given the earliest stimuli to a direction of future importance. Therefore, it is not at all superfluous to say a few words about the symbiosis of ethnically different monastic communities. It is a phenomenon as interesting as it is important in its consequences.

The monastery of Zeugma [1] founded by Publios [2] gained fame from its practice of psalmody, one which was carried out without interruption. The section of the community which was not able to perform the psalmody in Syriac joined the liturgical practice in their own Greek tongue. Publios built a church, one in which these ethnically different choirs were joined but in which otherwise both communities remained separate, each living under the rule of its abbot.

Theodoretos assures us that this liturgical practice was still being continued in his time, as was the administrative operation, each community under its own abbot [3].

Among the bilingual monasteries in Syria and Mesopotamia, the monastery founded by Alexander Akoimetos [4] overshadowed the other international monasteries in fame. Alexander was inspired by the idea of reforming monastic life in his own way, concentrating upon perpetual prayer, that is, perpetual doxology. The monastery which he founded on the right bank of the Euphrates [5] became very successful [6].

His monastery housed a community composed of different ethnic groups divided into choirs [7]. While there was only one abbot, the system of administration which was introduced placed every group under the jurisdiction of its respective authority [8].

[1] THEODORETOS, *Historia religiosa*, col. 1354.
[2] Greek speaking ascetics. attracted by Publios, the master of psalmody, urged him to build a monastery for all. He agreed, left his solitary life, and erected separate buildings for communities.
[3] THEODORETOS, *ibid.*
[4] *Vie d'Alexandre l'Acémète*, éd. DE STOOP, p. 643ff.
[5] PARGOIRE, «Un mot sur les Acémètes». p, 304ff,. 365ff,
[6] It is reported that the monastery grew steadily until the number of inmates reached four hundred.
[7] VAILHÉ, «Acémètes». p, 274ff.
[8] THEODORETOS. *Historia religiosa*, col. 1352.

This phenomenon cannot be passed over without an additional notice. The bilingual communities must have contributed more than their fair share to the creation of a different cultural atmosphere — on that, we can with a high degree of probability depend. The premises for generating a broader range of interest via these communities are patent. It can be assumed that Greek-speaking communities, and through them the traditions cherished in their circles awakened interest among the Syrians. There certainly were among them those who desired an enrichment for their meditation and spiritual life, even from traditions which originated in a tongue other than their own. Furthermore, it may be taken as reads that the impulses emanating from these international monasteries were crucial in the initiation, the inauguration of the great task of translating Greek sources into Syriac.

b. *The Role of the School of Edessa*

The work accomplished in the School of Edessa constituted still another important factor in the process.

Whereas traditions[1] regarding the origin of the School of Edessa are contradictory[2], and while any information about the school, its direction and activity over a considerable span of time lies hidden behind an impenetrable curtain of history, the first ray of light which can be perceived, focusses upon the epoch of Qiyōrē[3], the first director we know by name. He is introduced as a man in whom ascetic qualifications, administrative abilities and scholarly interests are preeminently combined[4]. He lives on in the tradition as the individual who introduced an important reform. Next to the indigenous works of 'Aphrēm, which had become normative in the curriculum during the initial period of the school, Qiyore was the person who realized the need for introducing the works of Theodoros of Mopsvestia into the program. This step was of

[1] BARḤADBEŠABBĀ, *La fondation des écoles*, éd. SCHER asserts that 'Aphrēm founded the school. About this point, however, we do not need to take Barḥadbešabbā at his word because it is questionable whether his sources about the origin of the school are as reliable as those reporting the later stages in the history of this center of learning, SOZOMENOS, *Historia eccl.* III, 16 remains silent in this respect, So too 'Aphrēm's vita in Syriac, *Hymni et sermones*, ed. LAMY. According to this source 'Aphrēm's numerous disciples constituted the School of Edessa.

[2] VÖÖBUS, «'Aphrēm and the School of Edessa», p. 209ff.

[3] He died in 446/7.

[4] VÖÖBUS, *History of the School of Nisibis*, p. 10ff.

fundamental significance not only with regard to the subsequent destiny of the school but also for the history of Syrian Christianity.

This centre of learning in a complex of buildings near the pond of Abraham became a focus for new stimuli. The great accomplishment of translating the Greek fathers into Syriac is associated with such names as Hībā, Qūmī and Prōbā[5]. These rich impulses bore such fruit that time after time others stimulated by a similar interest emerged one after another to extend the task of translating the Greek classical works in philosophy and the natural sciences into Syriac.

c. *The Role of the Centers of Learning in the Monasteries*

Another constituent in the creation of Graeco-Syro translation literature is the contribution of the centers of learning in the monastic communities. The most important await introduction.

At the forefront of monastic schools and centers of learning stands the monastery of Qennešrē. Its significance is so great that a review of salient facts about this school is in order. The story of the founding of the monastery is related by Zacharias of Mitylene[1]. The founder, Jōḥannān bar'Aphtōnāyā, was an abbot in the Mār Tūmā monastery in Seleucia at the Orontes when the persecution broke out and he, and his community, were expelled before the year 531 A.D. He founded a new monastery and became the first abbot of the monastery of Qennešrē[2]. His leadership of the newly established institution was all too short, since death called him on November 4,537, but not before he was able to designate Alexander as his successor in office. The latter can only have ruled a few years. Upon his death, the leadership passed into the hands of Jōḥannān. In any case, he must have been in office before 544.

The monastery grew into a large community of almost four hunderd monks[3]. It was destined to enter upon a path toward a great reputation when it engaged itself in the mission of learning and educational culture, especially Greek studies. Its founder had given it the important initial

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 21f.

[1] *Historia eccl.*, ed. BROOKS II, p. 80.

[2] Its location was on the eastern bank of the Euphrates vis-à-vis Ǧirbās, Europos. The surmise, that the location of the monastery is to be identified with Bāfittīn in Ǧebel Bārīšā, LITTMANN *ZfAssyr* I(1922), p. 178, has no foundation.

[3] YĀQŪT, *Mu'ǧam al-buldān* II, p. 688.

impetus and, in the course of time, it became a center of Greek and Syriac studies[4]. The third abbot also held to the same course[5].

The fame of the monastery as a hotbed of Greek studies blossomed with the passing of the years. This can easily be demonstrated through the stimuli which emanated from this institution as well as through the accomplishments realized by scholars who studied within its walls. For instance, Thomas of Ḥarqel produced a version of the New Testament on the basis of the Greek original[6]. Severos Sebokht[7] developed Greek studies in philosophy, mathematics and astronomy. He was a scholar of a scientific bent of mind, one of whom some vestiges remain on the pages of history.

The greatest concentration of monastic communities was to be found in Ṭūr ʿAbdīn, indeed, that area was the strongest center in the whole of Mesopotamia, and among the monasteries there, that located in the village of Qarṭamīn was pre-eminent. The eclat achieved by it outshone all other rivals. We are very fortunate that, in addition to the very few manuscripts which were known to exist[8], new documents could be uncovered in Istanbul[9], Mardin[10] and Mosul[11] so that — given the history of the transmission of this source[12] — its history is to be seen in the full light of day[13].

The zeal devoted to securing the literary heritage of the Greeks in Syriac animated this center, giving it its peculiar character. Jaʿqōb of

[4] Jōḥannān composed a commentary on the Song of Songs of which only fragments have survived in a catema patrum in Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 12,168, and a cycle of hymns composed in Greek; these were included into the Octoëchos of Severos of Antioch, and later translated into Syriac.

[5] Besides a number of hymns he composed a vita of Severos of Antioch which was written in Greek; it was completed before 544. composed at the request of Dimēṭ, a monk in the same monastery who in 544 became bishop of Laodicea; soon it was translated into Syriac.

[6] Cf, Vööbus, *The Apocalypse in the Harklean Version*, p. 1ff.

[7] Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, p. 247f.

[8] Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, p. 274; Ms. Paris Syr. 375 and 377 must be added to the list of those in the manuscript collections in Europe.

[9] Ms. Istanbul Meryem Ana. a huge corpus which has signature; our documents appear there as nr. 11-13.

[10] Ms. Mardin Orth. 257, quire 19, fol. 9b — quire 22, fol. 4b; Ms. 258, p. 37-214; Ms. 262, p. 1ff.; Ms. 275, fol. 162a — 208a; Ms. 358, quire 2, fol. 6a — quire 11, fol. 8b; see Vööbus, *Syriac Manuscripts*.

[11] Ms. Mosul Orth. 254. fol. 108a-132a,

[12] Vööbus, «Important Discoveries for the History of the Monastery of Qarṭamīn», p. 223ff.

[13] Vööbus, *History of Asceticism* II, p. 225ff.

Edessa, one of the greatest scholars among the west Syrians, cultivated many branches of Graeco-Syro study[14]. Indeed, just so much as to mention the names of these coryphees is enough to give us an idea of the magnitude of the work carried out in the monastery of Qarṭamīn.

According to a tradition kept in the monastery, it was founded in 397 during the reign of Emperor Arcadios by a monk named Šemūʿel. The pre-eminence of the monastery under the monks who followed him attracted monks from many areas. The road to fame and the halo of renown came swiftly, so rapidly that it drew the attention even of crowned heads[15].

This place harbored a community which, in addition to other activities, cultivated study, learning and advanced studies.

A paragraph in the biography of Philoxenos may serve as an illustration. When monks from the mountains of Qardu were on their way to the monastery of Qarṭamīn, Philoxenos joined the group. The text goes on to report: «There he learned all of the divine science, in Syriac and Greek; he succeeded so well that he became the head of the school of the monastery and of the neighboring districts. In a short period of time, he came to be called magister doctorum»[16].

Even during the rule of its early abbots, another monastery proved to be a magnet which drew a stream of inmates into the community and its famous center of learning. This monastery advanced steadily in importance until it was respectfully called the «great monastery» of Tell ʿAdā. The ruins of the monastery however are not that impressive whether in size or outward grandeur[17]. Without a doubt, its greatness derived from its influence as a center of learning: «This monastery has grown rich by interpretation also by readings and by the erudition and knowledge of the teachers, expositors and philosophers»[18]. In this connection, a

[14] See page 350f.

[15] They made their liberal help available to meet the aspirations of this growing community as is demonstrated in the architectural designs and decorative art, Bell, *Churches and Monasteries*, p. 66ff.

[16] Vööbus, «La biographie de Philoxène».

[17] Located on the southern slope of a high mount dominating all the adjacent heights to the west of Beroea. Thus Tell ʿAdā must be sought southward of Ǧebel Simʿān. Guidi found a place which today is called Tell ʿAdā, a little northwest of Turmanin, *Lettera di Filosseno*. p. 446. See also Vööbus, *History of Asceticism* II, p. 242f,; Butler, *Ancient Architecture, N. Syria*, p. 243ff.

[18] ܕܥܬܝܪܐ ܗܘܬ ܕܝܪܐ ܒܡܦܫܩܢܘܬܐ ܘܡܩܪܝܢܘܬܐ ܘܝܕܥܬܐ ܕܡܠܦܢܐ ܘܡܦܫܩܢܐ ܘܦܝܠܣܘܦܐ, Ms. Paris Syr. 377, fol. 224a.

paragraph taken from the biography of Philoxenos, which has already been quoted, is in order. We are told that Philoxenos went from Qarṭamīn to the western regions. «He reached the monastery of Tell ʿAdā which was richer in professors, students and exegetes than all other monasteries of the east and of the west; there, he perfected himself in the Greek and Syriac languages»[19].

Other monasteries containing centers of Greek studies such as the monastery of Mār Mattai also were in existence[20]. In some of them, Greek was a permanent subject in the curriculum; in others it was only offered from time to time. It may be confidently assumed that they also made contributions to the treasury of material translated from Greek into Syriac.

d. *The Most Important Translators*

As time went on, more and more was accomplished in the translation of the legacy of the Greeks. Many of the authors who participated regrettably remain unknown to us.

In the forefront of the phalanx of eminent translators there stands Sargīs of Rešʿaina (Theodosiopolis)[1], whose floruit falls at the end of the 5th and the beginning of the 6th centuries[2]. He won fame because he tackled the task of translating the Greek medical literature. Ḥunain in his account registers the fact that he translated twenty-two works of Galen[3]. These were the earliest translation of the treatises of Galen into Syriac. He is the first major scientific figure to appear in the Syriac speaking world.

That other contributions were made by other authors, over and above this individual's work, is clear. ʾAhrōn who flourished in the time of Emperor Heraclios (610-41) is an outstanding example as the author of the famous Pendecta, an extensive medical compendium. Another eminent example is to be seen in Jōḥannān bar Serapyōn[5]. He was the author of a medical kunnas, a compendium of medical knowledge.

[19] Cf. Ms. Vatican Syr. 135, fol. 1bff., 60ff.
[20] VÖÖBUS, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen* I.
[1] BAUMSTARK, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, p. 167ff.
[2] He died in 536 in Constantinople.
[3] *Risāla Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq alā ʿAlī ibn Yaḥyā* 4, 6, 7, 11, 12 etc, BERGSTRÄSSER, *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur*, p. 189.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 231, 353.

Among the authors of a similar reputation who stood at the forefront of the phalanx of translators is ʾAyyūb of Edessa[6]. He won fame as a translator of Galen into the Syriac tongue. Ḥunain indicates that a very large number of works of Galen were translated by him. Indeed, this list is impressive. Ḥunain's account registers thirty-two such works[7]. The discovery of the commentary on epidemics[8] by Hippocrates is a literary monument unique in several respects[9].

There were other translators of the works of Galen. Ḥunain's account mentions seven such authors but they rank far behind Sargīs and ʾAyyūb. Each of them is credited with the translation of one, exceptionally of three, of his treatises.

There were translators too who not only put Greek medical works into Syriac, but who labored in other areas of Greek learning. Sargīs produced works on logic, seven volumes no less, and in addition, two volumes of commentaries on the categories in which he compared the philosophies of Aristotle, Plato and the Stoics[10]. The Ketābā de-Semātā, «Book of Pressures», produced by ʾAyyūb of Edessa[11], is an encyclopaedia covering the philosophical and natural sciences. With regard to philosophical works of Greek literature, comments have been made elsewhere.

Thus were the shelves of literary treasure gradually filled. The libraries of many monasteries came to be crammed with works of the Greek world put into Syriac. Having undergone a history in which various factors were operative, these works finally found their place in the east. Then there occurred the historical moment which transmitted Greek wisdom to a new world.

e. *Translation of the Graeco-Syro Classical Works into Arabic*

In view of the immense importance of the mighty surge which would propel the heritage of the Hellenic spirit into the culture of the Islamic world, one simply must take a quick look at the major factors in this

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 230.
[7] *Risāla* 1, 16, 21, 35, 26, 27 etc.
[8] Ms. Damascus Patr. 12/25.
[9] VÖÖBUS, *The Emergence of Galen's Commentary on Hippocrates in Syriac*.
[10] BAUMSTARK, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, p. 167ff.
[11] *Encyclopaedia of Philosophical and Natural Sciences as Taught in Baghdad About A.D. 817 of Book of Treasures*, ed. MINGANA.

process, however much the subject deserves deeper and separate treatment[1].

The time of the great revival of the study of Greek classical wisdom in Islam hangs together with the enlightened attitude of certain caliphs. In this respect, the caliphs al-Mahdi, Hārūn al-Rashīd and in particular al-Māmūn[2] are to be noted.

A renaissance of Greek classical literature in Islam would probably not have happened had the way for it not been prepared by the enormous creativity of the Syrians in translating that material into Syriac. That fact constituted the fundamental premise for everything that followed. That is to say, it was the Syrians who tackled the profoundly difficult job of translating the Greek material into their own thoughtworld, one very different from that of the Greeks; it was they who created the terminology not to mention the technical devices needed to accomplish this feat. The rendering of these riches in the philosophical, medical, mathematical, geographical and the natural science realms in Arabic was thus made incomparably easier as a result. That was how by far the greater part of the Greek heritage became known to the Arabs — in a roundabout way via the Syriac translations. The significance of the prior translation of Greek wisdom into Syriac represents an accomplishment which cannot possibly be exaggerated.

The importance, in this connection, of the establishment of a school for translating materials into Arabic in Baghdad is obvious quite aside from the impetus it gave to such work. The school was established by al-Māmūn; it was founded during the latter years of his rule[3]. It was an academy intended for the translation of literary materials[4]. Despite its disadvantages[5] when compared with the centers of learning among the Syrians, its founding marks a critical milestone. It became even more significant when it was renewed and its leadership entrusted into the hands of Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq.

It was at this point in time that a giant among the Syrians appeared, one who was able to make unique contributions. We refer to the

[1] VÖÖBUS, *The Emergence and Cultural Historical Importance of Galen's Commentary* (in the press).

[2] See page 370ff,

[3] The foundation must have taken place before the year 830.

[4] Yūḥannā ibn Māsawaih of Ǧundišapur was appointed head.

[5] This school was not a place for teaching as in the centers of learning of the Syrians, but a library, a place of study and a center of translation.

renowned physician of Baghdad and deacon of the Nestorian church, Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq ibn Suleiman ibn 'Ayyūb al-'Ibādī, the greatest of the Syrian scholars during the middle ages. Through him a flood of literature was unleashed to transmit the wisdom of the Greeks to the world of Semitic culture. Among the categories of Greek learning, that of medical literature received the greatest attention. Given such extraordinary[6] literary accomplishments[7], he became the most eminent figure in Islamic intellectual history. He may deservedly be called the Erasmus of the Islamic renaissance.

His life and activities[8] stand fully in the light of history. Upon his return from the west, he began teaching in the field of medicine. The premises for success in his career were very favorable. When Caliph al-Māmūn established a regular school of translation in Baghdad, Ḥunain found his own niche as a translator. And when Caliph al-Mutawakkil renewed the school as the Bait al-Ḥikma, Ḥunain was entrusted with the direction of it. His life until his death in 877[9] or 873[10] according to other sources[11] was filled with the ceaseless creation of scholarly literature in translation. The report in his Risala is, to say the least, breathtaking[12]. His own contribution to this gigantic undertaking was immense.

The contribution made by his son, his nephew as well as the company of his pupils — about a hundred in number — who undertook the translation of works of smaller compass should also be noted. The quantity of Greek works translated into Syriac and from Syriac into Arabic multiplied rapidly, eventually embracing almost the whole of classical learning insofar as it had survived in Antioch, Edessa, Nisibis, Gundišapur and the Syrian monasteries. Thus did the Arab world become the beneficiary of virtually the entire legacy of Greek scientific works.

Almost a century and a half was to pass after the Arab conquest

[6] BAUMSTARK. *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, p. 227ff.

[7] The discovery of his *Risā*la for the first time reveals the magnitude of his legacy.

[8] *Risāla fi-mā aṣabahū mina l'-miḥan wa-š-šadā'id.* The text of his autobiography is included in UṢAIBI'A, *'Uyūn al-anbā'*, I, p. 191ff. Cf. GABRIELI, in: *Isis* VI. p. 282ff.

[9] GRAF, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur* II, p. 122ff.

[10] UṢAIBI'A, *'Uyūn al-anbā'* I, p. 190.

[11] IBN AL-NADĪM, *Kitāb al-fihrist*, p. 409; IBN KHALLIKĀN, *Kitāb Wafāyāt al-Āyān* I, p. 167.

[12] *Risala* The report in his *Risāla* describes more than 90 works of Galen translated by him into Syriac.

before this great endeavor of translating the Greek scientific heritage via Syriac into Arabic began to develop. But the work of translation then began to proceed at such a pace that the ninth century was in fact to become the great age of the translations. The riches of Greek learning embedded in Syriac manuscripts were catapulted to the frontiers of knowledge among the Arabs. No description can do justice to the basal importance of this achievement. Everything that had been accomplished in the Syriac tongue was now passed on to enrich the world of the Arabs, thus impelling the Islamic world of culture to heights greater than it could have imagined.

Throughout their history, the Syrians were never to enjoy the privilege of an independent political life, never to have the advantages of becoming a state. That was a misfortune which they could not circumvent. But, as if by compensation, history assigned the Syrians a role at once as unique as it was honorable in the realm of the spirit, a role which gave them an irreplaceable function in the trans-cultural enrichment of the Near and the Middle East.

INDEX OF MANUSCRIPTS

INDEX OF NAMES AND PLACES

a. = author; ab. = abbot; b. = bishop; c. = city; cal. = caliph; cath. = catholicos; ch. = church; cp. = encampment; c.s. = civil servant; em. = emir; emp. = emperor, empress; gl. = general; her. = heretic(s); hg. = hagiographer; kg. = king; m. = monk; miss. = missionary; mon. = monastery, convent; mrt. = martyr; mt. = mount(ains); patr. = patriarch; ph. = philosopher, philosophy; pr. = priest; prov. = province; r. = river; rg. = region; s. = synod; sct. = sanctuary; sh. = sheikh; st. = saint; tb. = tribe; tr. = translator; vl. = village.

TABLE OF CONTENTS